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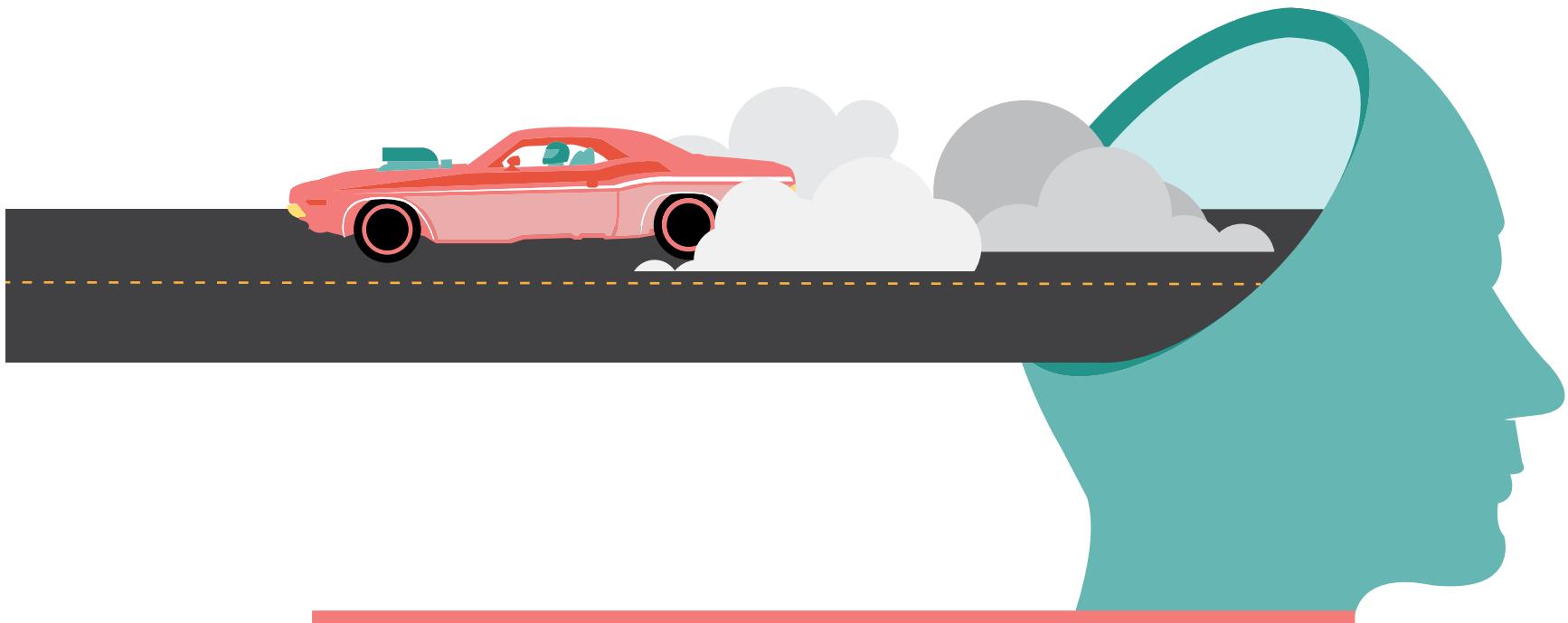
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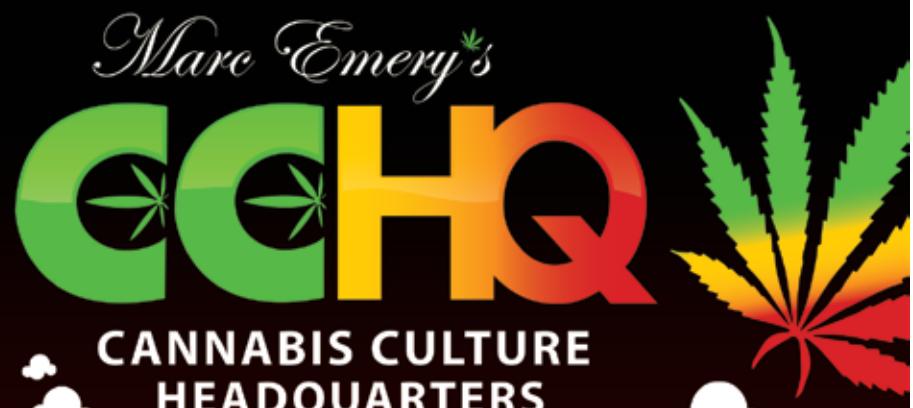
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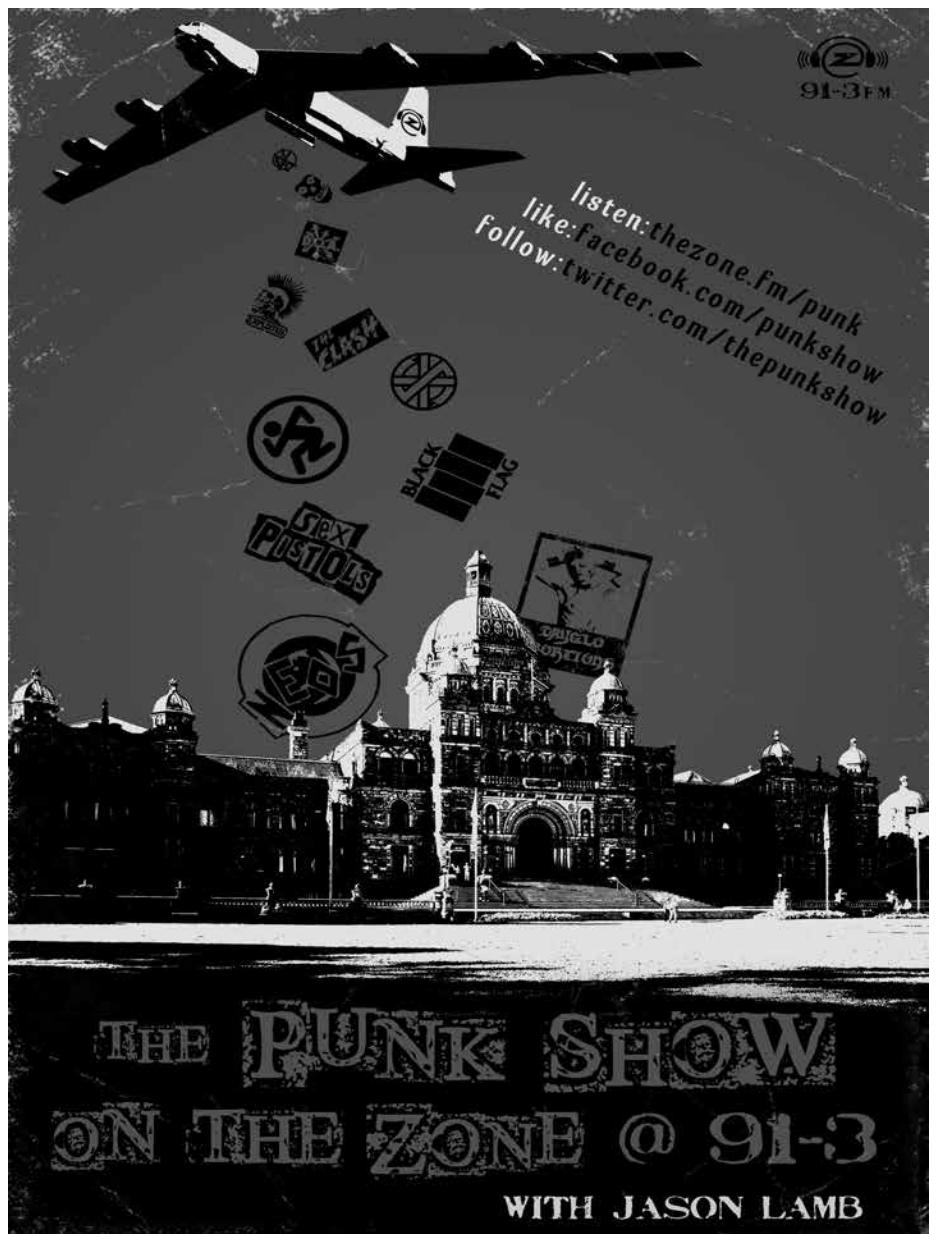
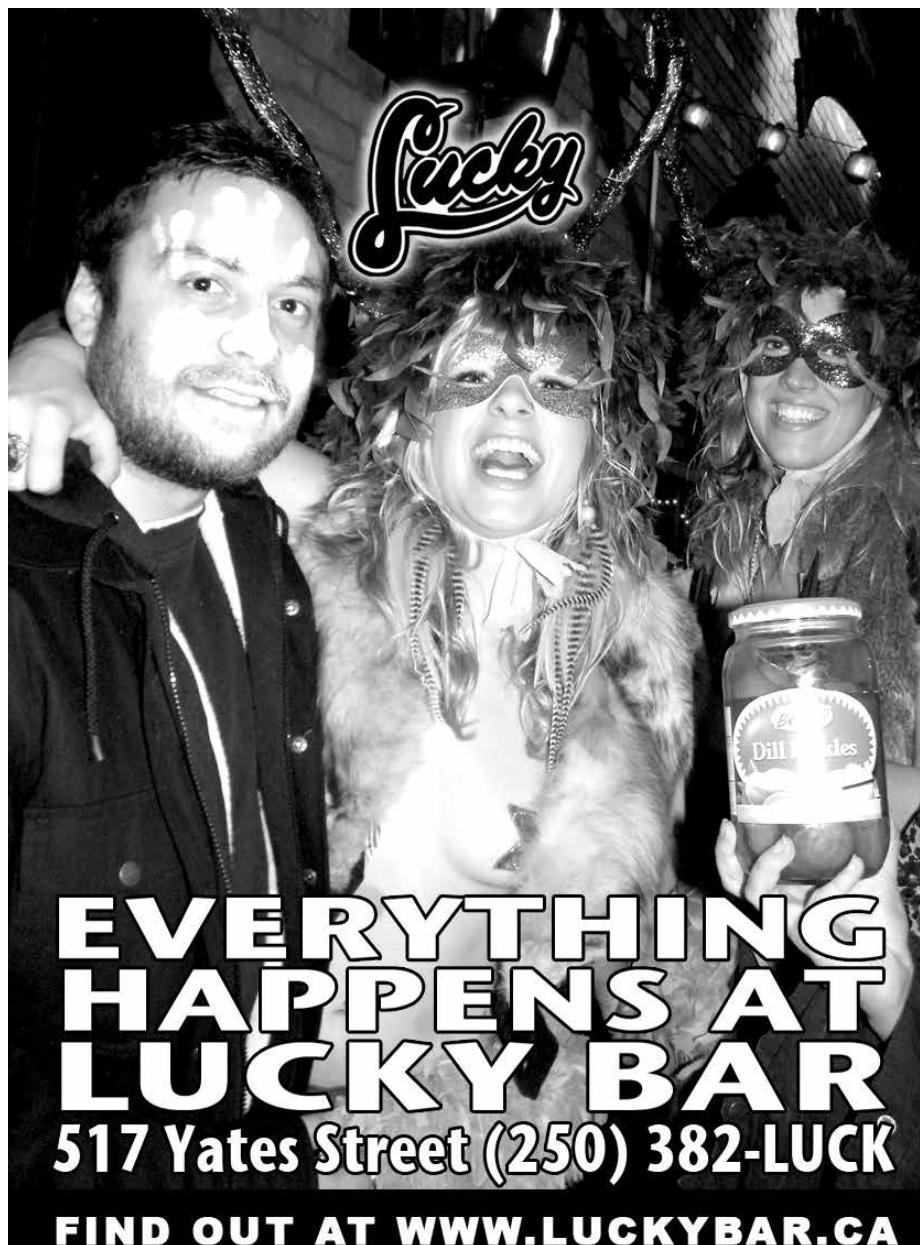
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Holocaust Lord

Interview by Michael F. Carnage

Holocaust Lord is a new black 'n roll band from Victoria. The four-piece band consists of former/current members of Galdras, Horde of Anachron, and Burialkult. The past experience seems to have helped things come together quickly, and they have just released a four-song demo full of hell, Satan, sleaze and attitude. I'm pretty impressed with the raw sound so far, and I can't wait for some shows. I had some questions answered by vocalist Phlegathon to get all the nasty details.

Absolute Underground: What are some of the other bands that you guys are in/have been in?

Phlegathon: We're all in another bands, some of us are in more than a few. We've all been playing music for a long time and like to have fingers in more than one pie... I think the appeal of having other projects is diversity and challenge, not to mention the simple fact that the musician gene

Motörhead and Venom, soon after that I asked Lord Koronzon if he'd be interested in playing bass. After a few try outs on drums, we landed Olaf on drums. To that, add extreme aggression and alcohol and you have the nucleus and heart of what Holocaust Lord is!

AU: If this demo gets lots of buzz and attention, do you have big plans for this band?

Phlegathon: We released the *Go To Hell* [demo] only about a month ago and it has received positive attention so far. It can be found on Iron Bonehead records (Germany). Of course, there are other things in the works that I can't mention at this moment, but for a band that has only been around for not even a year, Holocaust Lord is rolling full steam ahead and has no plans of stopping.

AU: Is there a band you would really want Holocaust Lord to share a bill with?

pool in Victoria is quite shallow, especially when it comes to extreme and subversive music.

AU: How long have you been wanting to put together a more rock 'n roll type project?

Phlegathon: Actually I never really considered performing music of this genre. I've always had an extreme appreciation for rock 'n roll and the inflammatory nature and danger behind the spirit of "true" rock 'n roll. I've always been drawn to aggressive and raw music, so I guess being in a band like Holocaust Lord is a natural reaction to that. Me and KK Destructor (guitar) basically just met and talked about how much we like

Phlegathon: Shitfucker.

AU: Are you guys already putting together songs for another release?

Phlegathon: Yes. We are currently writing a full-length release for an undisclosed record label from France. I can't say too much on that topic for obvious reasons, but rest assured that the full-length will be filthy, sleazy and as raw as the demo.

AU: Are there any interesting stories involved with forming the band or coming up with the name?

Phlegathon: I guess it depends on one's definition of interesting. We faced a bit of flak for our choice of name. Victoria has always been a very political town, leaning a little to the left. That being said, us being the people we are, we simply choose to not give a fuck. Like I had mentioned earlier in this interview, rock 'n roll is supposed to be about the middle finger, about pissing people off and not giving a fuck about trend and social sensitivity. Holocaust Lord is about destruction, death, sleaze, filth and Satan. If you don't like these things, Holocaust Lord is not the band for you.

AU: Are there any particular bands that have influenced this project?

Phlegathon: Venom, Motörhead, Bathory.

AU: Do you ever have to try to work on your image or do you just do whatever you want?

Phlegathon: Image comes naturally to us and the band. First and foremost, we aren't trying to reinvent the wheel or be something we're not.

VICTORIA'S LOCALS ONLY



Leather, metal and hell is who we are and what we represent, so in that way we do what we want.

AU: What's the best way for people to get your music?

Phlegathon: You can now officially buy our music directly from Iron Bonehead records at <http://ironbonehead.de>, or you can buy our music by attending a Holocaust Lord show.

AU: Is there a band out there you think people really need to hear?

Phlegathon: Probably lots, but I'll stick to the genre that we are talking about. Shitfucker, Raw Poison, Whip Striker, Bulldozing Bastard...

AU: Anything you have to say that you think people need to hear?

Phlegathon: We have a local show coming up with Blackrat and Fornication at Logan's Pub on Thursday, August 7th.

More information at www.ironbonehead.de

Kill Matilda

Kill Matilda

Interview by Michael F. Carnage

Kill Matilda is a zombie rock'n roll band currently from Vancouver. Over the last seven years, they have been touring and recording relentlessly. Even after some near deadly health issues in the past year, they're back on tour, taking their live show and zombie-killing skills to every city and town they can find. Absolute Underground's Michael Carnage recently put together an interview with leader Dusty Exner to talk about zombies and the road.

Absolute Underground: You've been through a lot lately, have you ever thought about giving up on the whole rock'n roll roadshow?

Dusty Exner: Yes and no. When things have been really slow during times where we weren't doing much, or when we've been through troubling health periods, we lose momentum and the importance of everything we are doing seems far away. It can be really aggravating to see shitty pop bands and lame rock bands that suck getting all the glory for rehashing the same old

AU: Is there someone out there who you hate being compared to?

DE: Bill Cosby. No, but seriously, Avril Lavigne. It doesn't happen as much anymore now that she's not really as active as a musician, but it's frustrating that women in rock are still so underrepresented that any imposter in black eyeliner can come along and be lumped in with us legit female rock musicians. I think I even once read a headline that called her "Queen of the Punk Chicks" or something really ludicrous like that. Imagine if Michael Buble just grew a beard and suddenly the media was identifying him as a metal musician! The musical divide between what a pop artist like Avril does and what we do is so wide, yet for a lot of mainstream listeners she's the closest thing to a "rock" or "punk" female artist that they've ever seen. So lame. It's wack.

AU: As much as I see myself as the fearless zombie killer, when I watch zombie films I cheer for the zombies. Are you the same?

DE: Heeeeeell no! If you work in an office do you cheer for the paper jam in the printer? Those things are damn drudgery when you

shit when bands like us and others that we play with are being innovating, exciting and working our asses off. Once we are actively playing shows and planning tours etc, those feelings go away. Not even a severe health issue [Dusty nearly died in January] can really get in our way... the show must go on! For us, life is meaningless if we aren't kicking ass and playing rock'n roll music. We really don't have a choice.

work in Zombie Management like we do. Although, to be fair, there's always that one really annoying dude who eventually gets ripped to pieces by the zombies and you always have to feel a little satisfaction over that.

AU: Any cities you plan on inhabiting in the near future? A dream city?

DE: There was this episode of Doctor Who where there was a city built on the back of a whale that swam through outer space. So, that one. I also think we'd make a lot of money if we lived in Gotham City. But until either of those places are taking applications for a rock band, we've got our sights set on Toronto and New York.

AU: If a raccoon was hitchhiking, would you pick it up?

DE: Only if it could roll really good joints or had a lot of money because ass, grass or cash, no one rides for free, - but none of us are attracted to raccoons. Too many scratches.

AU: Which road-stop always has the creepiest experience?

DE: Small-town Saskatchewan; we once stopped at an old-time-y general store in Borden, SK. We wanted to buy something but everything had such a thick layer of dust or was so far past its expiry date that in the end we just booked it out of there. It was so lonesome and creepy, it seemed like the kind of place they chopped up little kids in the basement. We were waiting for the duelling banjos to start playing in the background. Tacos (our drummer) asked if the town had any "sights"

VANCOUVER VENGEANCE



and the grocery store guy told us that they had a church and that they "still" had a school! That town was so deserted, I think we saw the same little girl ride past us on her bike twice in the same direction.

AU: Pick a fight: five zombie children or Jared Leto with a switch-blade?

DE: The real question is who would win in a fight between five children with switchblades vs. zombie Jared Leto?

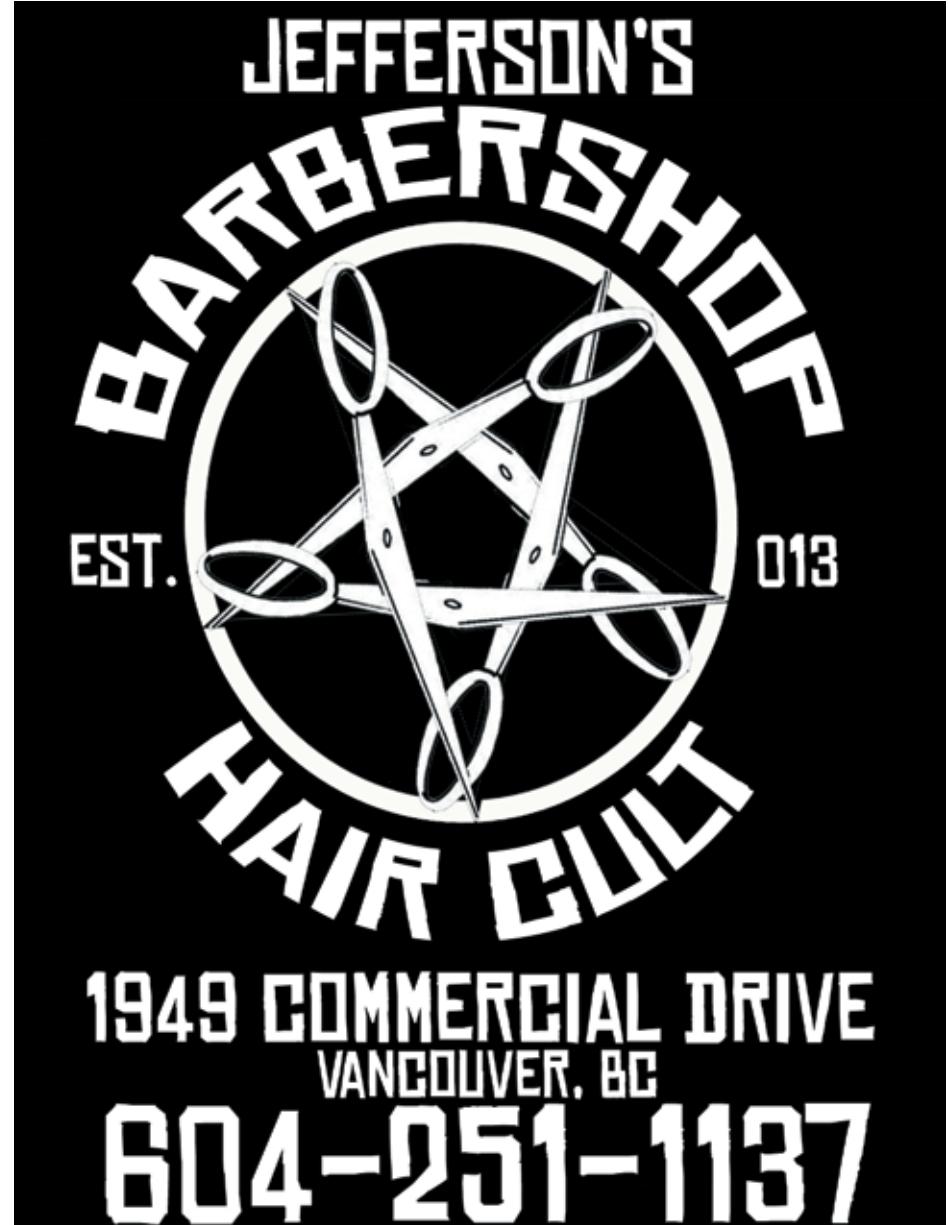
Kill Matilda is on tour right now making a ton of stops across Canada. You can check out their websites for dates, stories and to stream some free music:

<https://www.facebook.com/killmatilda>

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WRETCHED WINNIPEG



some depth to the title and concept of your albums, care to elaborate?

CL: Yeah, each album has a name which is an un-recognized word in the English language. We consider *Hürdür* our first album, *Humanitorium* our second and *Hymnosis* our third. *Hymnosis* is the action occurring to a human after it enters the Humanitorium. It's the transference of energy and knowledge through hypnotic hymns by a method similar to osmosis, hence the amalgamation of the words...

AU: Psychotic Gardening seems to sit in a genre-niche somewhat of its own. Who influences Psychotic these days?

CL: I've always been influenced by Celtic Frost, Possessed, and older stuff like that. I don't really listen

to a lot of newer music, but there is definitely some good stuff out there. I currently love Triptykon, I just find it to be absolutely amazing! We all do actually! I've always been influenced by bands like Type O Negative, My Dying Bride, Death, Possessed, Suffocation, the list goes on.

AU: How much touring has Psychotic done over the years? Tour plans for *Hymnosis*?

CL: Well, in the last two years, we haven't played live very much at all. We wanted to record the album and playing live means rehearsals, and that means never time to record, so we said, "No live shows until the album is done!" We plan on touring throughout the summer. We have a few festivals booked (Calgary Metal Fest and Farmageddon) in the next little while, then we have a bunch of Eastern dates later in the summer.

*More information at
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Psychotic-Gardening/8376017862>
reverbnation.com/psychoticgardening*



and a substantial discography. Winnipeg death veterans Psychotic Gardening fit that profile – a band that, for over 10 years, has stayed true to what counts the most – themselves. Now just releasing their third studio album, *Hymnosis*, and gearing up for some big ticket bills across Canada and beyond, Absolute Underground's Charley Justice spoke with long-time Manitoba metal mainstay and PG axemaster Chuck Labossiere...

Absolute Underground: For starters, I'm sure your name elicits questions in every interview. So... explain the name?

Chuck Labossiere: Well yes, it sure does, haha! You see, at the time of its conception in the mid 90s, there was already an over-saturation of bands playing death metal with the same old typical names. They all sounded the same too, because they all felt like they had to follow "the rules" of the genre. I said, "Fuck that!" I never wanted to be another clone, and I was always under the Celtic Frost school of thought where I wanted to

be different and do whatever the hell I wanted to do. I wanted to choose a name that would also make people have to think about what it means, and something that could have multiple meanings, too. One of the meanings relates to the way the media "conditions" society. Like how all the news "programs" create fear and insecurity in the public's mind. We all know what this leads to. Well, that is a form of "Psychotic Gardening", or "human conditioning". Our brand is based on growing an awareness of other levels of consciousness in this current human state. Another reason I liked the name "Psychotic Gardening" was because it scared away the fan with the "cave-man" mentality. I generally hate humans to begin with, and I especially have trouble being around ignorant worms with a "below fourth grade" education, so this name acted as a great filter to deflect that scum far away from me. They would automatically write off the band because of the name, and I would gladly say, "Goodbye!"

AU: So you've been around the Winnipeg metal scene for quite a while... Can you even name all the bands you've played in?

CL: Ha, yes, since 1989. I could name all of them, but there are a few who I won't mention because they don't deserve any respect. I will name Immortal Possession, Serrated Scalpel, and my current bands, Eym and Psychotic Gardening, plus an un-named side project with a long-time friend.

AU: Quality over quantity, I see. Can you describe 1994 vs 2014 in five words?

CL: Quality control was still implemented.

AU: So *Hymnosis* is here, f'n rights! When was it tracked? Where'd you record? How was tracking?

CL: Ah yes, I'm very happy it's finally out of my hands! It was tracked for the last year and a half, off and on. Tracking went really well because we record everything ourselves, so there is no stress from an impatient engineer or from budget woes. Our drummer, Matt Penner, tracked all of his drums at his own home studio. I tracked all my guitars, Andrew's rhythms and leads, plus all of Gillishammer's and my vocals, at our band's rehearsal space/studio. Mike Janssen recorded his own bass tracks. I did the all the editing, mixing and production at my home studio.

AU: I definitely get the impression there is

Psychotic Gardening

'Organic death metal...'

Interview with Chuck Labossiere by Charley Justice

Bands that cater to trends die with them. The bands that last are the bands that do whatever the fuck they want to. These bands that last inevitably develop a focused sound, a tight set

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CALGARY CARNAGE



Triton

Interview by Allison Drinnan

Things are getting a bit heavier in Calgary – thanks, in part, to the new band Triton, featuring members of Tree Burning, Kataplexis and IODE. The three-piece features Steve Morton on vocals and guitar, Kellen Wylsouzil on bass and vocals, and Davel Callahan on drums. The result is a devastatingly heavy mix of KEN mode, Cult of Luna and *Remission*-era Mastodon.

Triton has just released their five-song debut EP, appropriately titled *Thunderbeast*, and answered a few questions for Absolute Underground's Allison Drinnan about the album and their plans for the upcoming year.

Absolute Underground: Tell me a bit about the history of your band and how you got started.

Triton: Steve and Dave have been playing in local bands Tree Burning and Kataplexis since they moved to Calgary. Talks of jamming together led to actually jamming, and eventually pursuing a band after a handful of songs were put together. Kellen was spotted for his hair and bass playing in local band IODE, and it was a natural fit.

AU: What are some of the major influences of the band?

Triton: Definitely all the heavy local bands that we get to play with and see on a regular basis. There are tons of wicked local bands that are really raising the bar, like The Weir, Doberman, Exit Strategy, Temple, and Nosis, just to name a few.

AU: How did you come up with the name "Triton"?

Triton: Dave got the idea on vacation at the Seattle aquarium. There was a gnarly octopus with that name.

AU: How do you think performing as a three-piece adds to the dynamic of the band?

Triton: For jamming and writing, there are less toes to step on. Playing live as a three-piece really makes you step up your playing; you tend to be singled out, and it pushes us to be tighter and work together.

AU: You guys have a really great way of combining the two main vocalists... would Dave ever jump on the vocal train?

Triton: He's been traumatized by mics in the past. It may be too soon. The wounds are too deep. Getting your hair stuck in a mic stand and needing your gal to untangle you at a show is enough to drive anyone away.

AU: Tell me about *Thunderbeast*... what can people expect from this album?

Triton: A heavy and hairy hard-hitting five songs. There's a good mix of dynamics between and within the songs. Except for vocals - those are always on 11.

AU: How did you come up with the title? I think it is really appropriate for your sound... do you?

Triton: Steve's got a great way with words. Buffalo documentaries turn into epic album names.

AU: LOVE the artwork for the album! Tell me

about it!

Triton: Kellen's gal Julie dabbles in photo manipulation, and he handled the album layout and design. It just seemed natural. We were looking for something simple and primitive. Plus, it's pretty different from most of what is the metal norm.

AU: You've been asked to play some pretty awesome shows in Calgary. Why do you think people are responding so well to Triton?

Triton: We are proud of our songs and have a real blast playing live. We like treating the audience to a show that matches the intensity of our music. It seems people are picking up on that and reacting in kind.

AU: You guys released a physical copy of your EP and it is available online. Why choose to release a physical copy?

Triton: Because physical music matters. It's a token of support. It's just nice to be able to hold something.

AU: Lots have local bands have been working with Casey Rogers – why did you choose to work with him?

Triton: We heard a few of the projects he had recorded and really got into the idea of working with him. Not to mention we are all fans of his bands. Working with Casey was great. He really pushes you.

AU: Any plans for a full-length in the near future?

Triton: Yeah, we have a fistful of songs, and we really want to put out some vinyl. We're trying to make it happen sooner as opposed to later.



AU: Will Triton be heading out on the road anytime soon?

Triton: We've played Lethbridge, which was a real blast. We're toying with the idea of a mini-tour. We'll see what happens.

AU: Best hair out of any band in Calgary.... any tips for keeping luscious locks?

Triton: Girlfriends. And headbanging... Headbanging girlfriends.

More information at

<http://tritonyc.bandcamp.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/tritonmetal>



Ides of Winter

By Lacey Paige

The current Canadian metal landscape is more vibrant now than it ever has been; few metal-heads will try to debate that. However, there is one thing that the market is sorely lacking: balls-out, bat-shit-insane stage theatrics. It is a rare occasion to attend a metal show where a featured Canadian band is costumed head-to-toe in the most elaborately designed Viking attire; the stage is outfitted with icicles and traces of wintery flora and fauna in such a way that you'll feel as though you've been propelled to the bitter cold



Arctic isles of Western Europe—or, more fittingly, just another typical January in Alberta. These idiosyncrasies happen to be the very essence of Edmonton-based melodic black metal band, Ides of Winter.

Comprised of a very diverse quintet of nefarious Neanderthals, Ides of Winter delivers perhaps one of the most histrionic shows you will ever catch at one of the many quaint, bare-boned

venues of Western Canada. And while most bands endeavour to melt faces with an extreme degree of metal, Ides of Winter blasts audiences with the audial equivalent of liquid nitrogen, destroying frostbitten eardrums and blasting chillingly fierce gusts of tunes down into the marrow of their bones.

The climatic aesthetic that Ides of Winter conveys with such vigour was almost entirely a byproduct of the band's habitation of Northern Canada, where -30 C is the norm during the height of the winter months.

"We live in one of the coldest countries in the world and one of the coldest cities in Canada, so it goes without saying that we felt like embodying that spirit into our music," says the strikingly wolf-like guitarist and back-up vocalist, Lycaon Vollmond.

Vocalist Caesar Tiberius also credits much of Ides of Winter's thespian appeal to their philosophy of showmanship.

"We're entertainers," he states. "We're there to entertain. The people that pay money are there to be entertained. So for us to show up and just half-ass is it just not an option. It's all out or nothing for us. It's how we've always done this."

The eerily poetic nature of the music and the balanced orchestration with carefully thought-out vocal placements seem to be a key focus for Ides of Winter.

"The vocals are another instrument," Tiberius explains. "It's part of the orchestration. Everything has its own place and everything's a part of the general orchestration that's going on. All the energy and stuff from the vocal range is keeping up with its environment. It's not a focal point; it's part of the experience itself."

Each member of the band possesses a distinguished persona that is built upon a reflection of his true identity.

"Some of the aspects actually reflect upon our own people, as ourselves," Vollmond says. "Like [bassist] Psychron [Mithridate]—he's like the Keith Richards of black metal. And me, well a lot of people say I have wolf-like features—and I really like sex... as a dog does."

As for the integration of the lavish costumes and set pieces, Ides of Winter expresses gratitude for the vibrant array of creative insights that came together to bring their vision for the band to actualization.

"We knew what we wanted to achieve in the end, and it was the good people that we have around us that saw it through to fruition," Tiberius reflects.

Ides of Winter credits several revered forefathers of shock rock for rousing their mutual passion for theatrics and extreme music. Among those influences are King Diamond, GWAR, and of course, the godfather of shock rock himself, Alice Cooper.

"When you talk about theatre and music, no one even comes close to Alice Cooper," Tiberius says. "I've been an admirer of his music and his stage show for a long time. There's strong music and great presentation, but that's the epitome of a great entertainer to me—putting it all together. There's nothing that a band can do nowadays that Alice Cooper hasn't done."

The band's primary objective at this point is to project themselves as the coldest band in existence, and to put Canada on the map for



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Fig. 1.—Airborne bicycle in jumping position

DEAD NUDE GIRLS

Ryan Nicholson's Dead Nude Girls

Interview by Lacey Paige

Vancouver-based wizard of depravity Ryan Nicholson first surfaced from the sludge of Canadian underground cinema in 2004 with his shot-on-video torture-revenge flick, *Torched*. But it wasn't until his magnum opuses, *Gutterballs* and *Hanger*, were unleashed upon the subterranean cinephilic masses that he really started garnering attention. Since his inaugural years as a full-fledged director, writer and producer, Nicholson has built an unparalleled reputation for himself as one of ballsiest independent filmmakers to

currently be churning out gore flicks. His production company, Plotdigger Films, delivers some of the most sought-after titles within the underground film market. Armed with his equally perverse team of sickos, a wicked sense of boldly-black humour and a certain nefarious ferocity, Nicholson recently unveiled what could very well be considered his nastiest film yet, *Dead Nude Girls*. Absolute Underground sat down with him to discuss this new level of licentiousness that seeps through his latest release.

Absolute Underground:
Looking back on your filmography as a whole, you've always taken this

sort of no-holds-barred approach. Your films always push the boundaries of graphic sexual violence, but somehow you've still managed to outdo yourself with *Dead Nude Girls*. So how did you go about exceeding your own unparalleled level of perversity and depravity?

Ryan Nicholson: I think it's the people that I work with that will do anything for me. They allow me to explore the more graphic stuff. My wife, Megan, pushes me to get filthier and nastier. That gives me the freedom to film stuff like *Dead Nude Girls*. In the past, I had people interfering with how far I could take things.

AU: So how do you mentally prepare yourself

to create such disturbing material?

RN: I actually get inspiration from true stories, like that guy that kept the three women locked away in his house for years—how something like that can go on in a neighbourhood without anyone knowing. The *Dead Nude Girls* killer is like him... only worse.

AU: How did you go about casting? Was the

ABSOLUTE HORROR

time. It seems to be a trend with my more recent movies.

AU: The killer in *Dead Nude Girls*, played by yourself, is portrayed with a surprising amount of depth. He has a normal hobby (bird watching), a rather daft sense of humour



nudity and extreme sexual violence ever an issue of concern for yourself or any of the cast and crew?

RN: Every actor was curious as to how far we could take it. But all were cool with it. There was no script. It was all improvised. We would all break out laughing during the most disturbing scenes because what we were doing was so dark, we needed to just relax and have a good time. The editor, my best friend, was actually traumatized and it really made a lasting impression on him.

AU: One thing that really sets *Dead Nude Girls* apart from your other films is the absence of that pitch-black humour that you're so well known for. Do you consider this a major pitfall of the film that could result in less people appreciating—or even just tolerating—it for what it is?

RN: I had to get the evil out of my system and thought I had done so with "The Good Wife", which was my segment on an anthology I will not name because it is a joke. But yeah, the movie was never finished so most of my fans never got to see "The Good Wife", which was void of the typical comedic tone I usually throw down. So on that note, I made *DNG* to kind of cleanse myself of that shitty experience.

AU: The film clocks in at just under an hour. Why the shorter running time? Do you think that if you had made it longer there would have been a greater likelihood of viewers calling you out on pushing the envelope too far? (After all, even the most hardened gore hounds have their limits.)

RN: The more films that I make, the more I seem to enjoy creating something shorter. Maybe it is my own attention span or something, but I really enjoy films that are an hour to 70 minutes long. I feel I can say what I want with that running

and exhibits a certain amount of intelligence in the way he comes up with ways to lure in his victims. He's similar to some of the best psychopaths in the history of horror cinema—Joe Spinell's Frank Zito (*Maniac*), Michael Rooker's Henry (*Portrait of a Serial Killer*), Fred Vogel's Peter (*August Underground*). So why did you choose to portray him the way you did, and why did you decide to take on the role yourself as opposed to casting someone else?

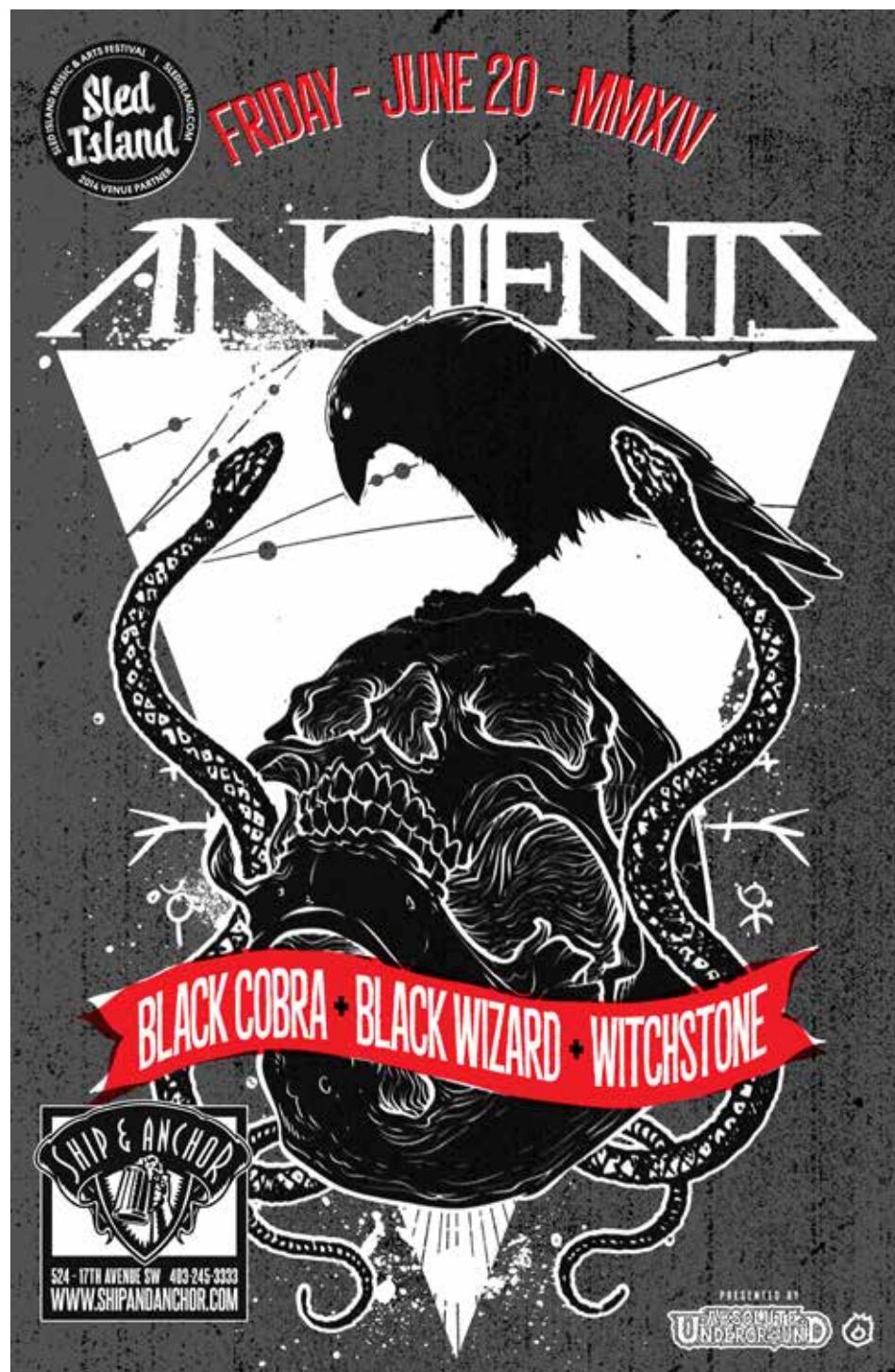
RN: I don't think I could trust anyone to do what I was doing. The stuff with scissors was dangerous. I think the fact that my wife was there put the girls at ease. I look at all those characters you mentioned as inspiration.

AU: Films such as *Toe Tag's August Underground* trilogy, the notorious *Guinea Pig* series, Nick Palumbo's *Murder-Sit-Pieces*, etc... have been cited as possible factors that influenced some of the world's most notorious real-life murderers. One could easily lump *Dead Nude Girls* into that category. What impact do you think these types of films have on viewers and genre cinema in general?

RN: I think *August Underground* made an impression on me for sure. It was vile and I dug it. I tried for that ugliness, and so far, I think I achieved my goal. The message to take away from it is don't get in a car with a stranger and don't ridicule someone you don't know because that person might be a serial killer!

AU: Do you have any upcoming projects you'd like to share with Absolute Underground readers?

RN: *Gutterballs 2*, more *DNG* and a true story of a mysterious suicide (but more or less a murder). plotdigger.com/



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Ink By Saga

Interview by Ira Hunter

Absolute Underground: Introduce yourself.

Sean Anderson: Sean 'Saga'
Anderson, tattooist & illustrator,
Human Kanvas Calgary, Calgary,
AB.



AU: What are you most famous/infamous for?
SA: Getting a purple nut sack tattooed on my leg

AU: How did you get started tattooing?

SA: Grew a set after watching my ex do it for a year... was hooked.

AU: Where are you currently located?

SA: Human Kanvas Calgary, and tour monthly.

AU: How would you describe the shop?

SA: It's a young, rad, loud, crazy, custom tattoo shop.

AU: What do you like about tattooing in Alberta?

SA: No shortage of willing victims for

my long sessions.
AU: What styles does you specialize in?

SA: Colour realism, portraits, trash polka, geometric abstractions.

AU: What makes your tattoos unique?

SA: Vivid realism and colour composition

AU: We originally met at the Calgary Comic-Expo, and your logo had a Star Wars theme. Are you a fan-boy?

SA: The Intergalactic Whores, of course. Fucking love it. Long live the Empire.

AU: Does your nerdom translate into your tattoos sometimes?

SA: Every chance I get. I'd tattoo Star Wars-inspired stuff every day if I could.

AU: What was the weirdest thing/ costume

you saw at the Comic Convention that weekend?

SA: Ron Burgundy was king, jug of milk and all.

AU: Do you work in other art forms as well, like painting or airbrush?

SA: Markers are my weapon of choice, prismacolor and copics. It's how I taught myself realism.

AU: What is your ultimate goal as an artist?

SA: Take over the Galactic Republic and eliminate the Jedi.

AU: Any advice for new tattoo artists just starting out?

SA: Don't fuck it up.

AU: What's the craziest request for a tattoo you have ever gotten?

SA: A sole-of-the-foot smiley face, first tattoo. I told him to fuck off and get a real one.

AU: What types of music do

like to listen to when tattooing?

SA: Drum'n bass, chillstep, indie

AU: What can you tell us that your mother doesn't even know about you?

SA: I dream of electric sheep.

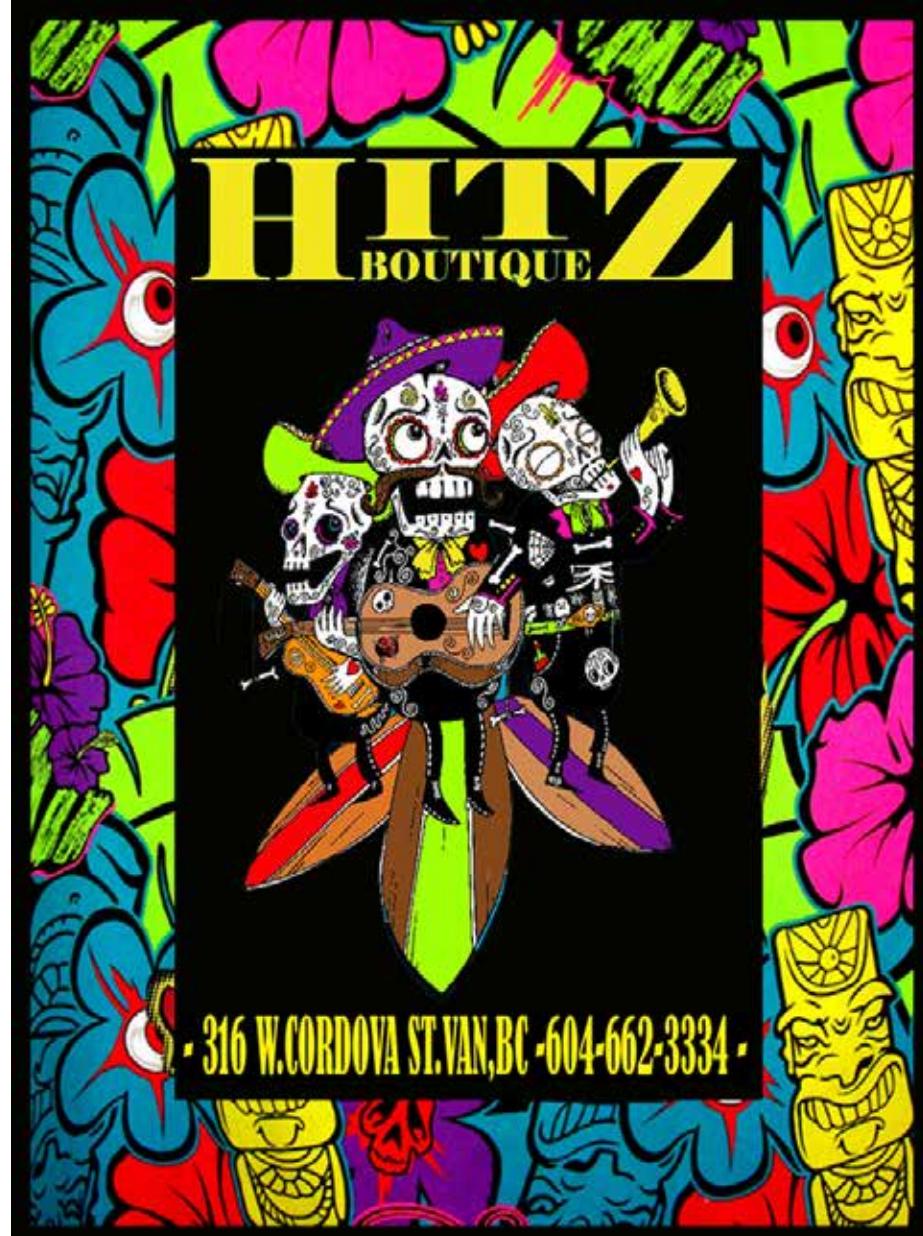
AU: Plans for the future?

SA: Touring, teaching, and learning.

AU: Final words for people reading this?

SA: Get a nut sack tattooed on you today. Live.

*More information at
<http://humankanvas.com/>
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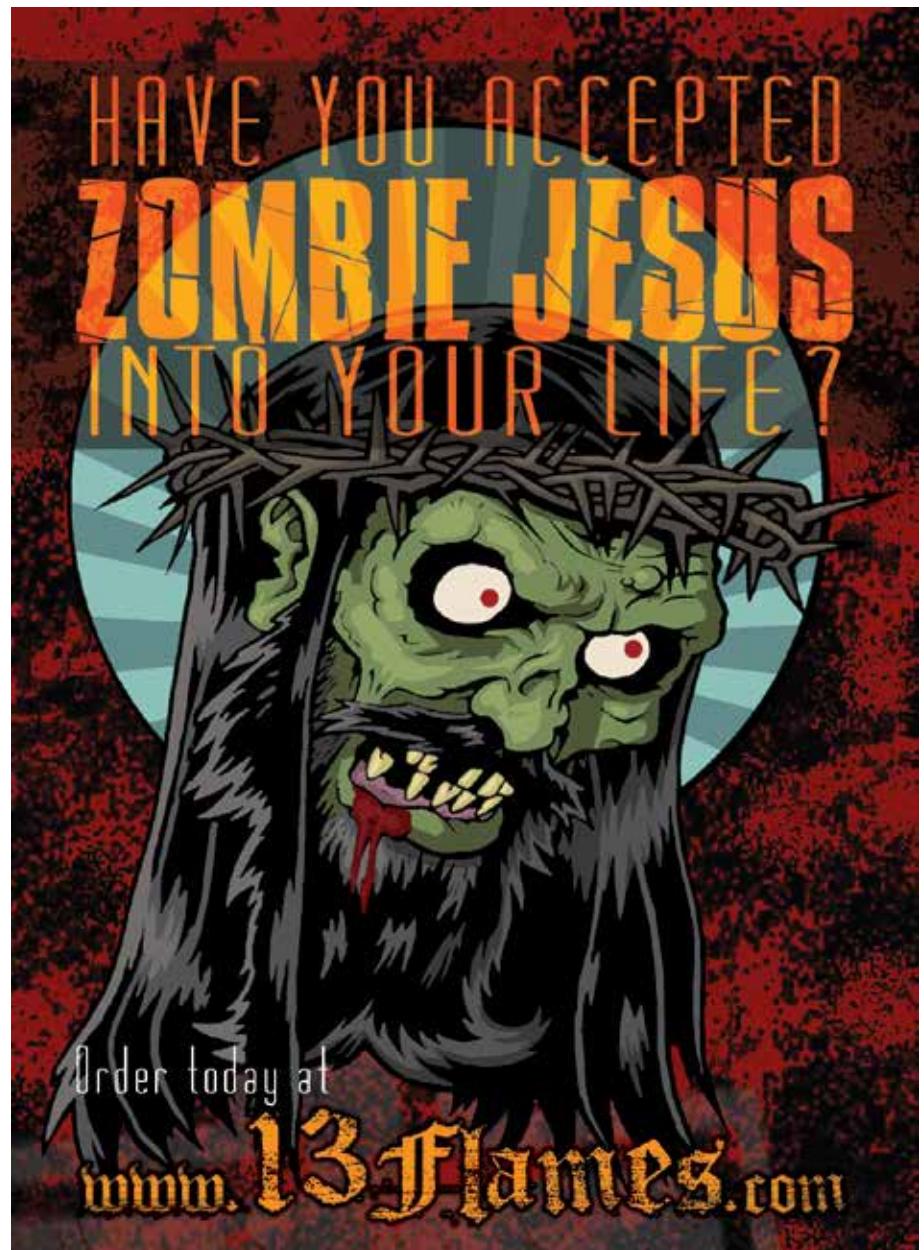


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THE GREAT SABATINI MONTREAL MASSACRE

The Great Sabatini

Interview by Allison Drinnan

When it comes to being loud and heavy, it doesn't get much better than The Great Sabatini. Formed in 2007 in Montreal, the quartet, comprising Steve Sabatini, Sean Sabatini, Rob Sabatini and Joey Sabatini, have been creating a poetic mix of noise, sludge and doom and pushing the boundaries of heavier music ever since.

Coming off the success of their 2012 album, *Matterhorn*, and the digital release of the 2012 EP *The Royal We*, the Sabatini boys are back with another album called *Dog Years*, which will drop



on June 2nd to kick this summer off right. Sean Sabatini was nice enough to chat with Absolute Underground's Allison Drinnan before they head out on tour, which includes a stop at Calgary Metal Fest.

Absolute Underground: Tell us about the new full length, *Dog Years*, being released through Solar Flare Records.

Sean Sabatini: It's our third full-length record, and

our seventh official release overall. It's a pretty mixed bag of songs, but they all share the same immediacy and big, raw sound. We're always striving for IMperfection... we want our records to sound like an actual band made them, not some maverick producer. A big factor in that was Sean Pearson though... the guy who technically "produced" the record. He understood just what we were going for, I feel.

AU: How do you think the new album differs from *Matterhorn* and how do you think you have progressed since the last album?

SS: I'm immensely proud of *Matterhorn*. It was, for us, a more "serious" record... maybe. Overall, it's a tad darker, and to me, *Dog Years* sounds more fun, even if some of the riffs and subject matter are, at their core, bleak and super dark. We've progressed simply by harnessing the focus that it took to make *Matterhorn* the way we wanted to. The blueprint for our top secret working method was born when we made *Matterhorn*, and now it's being finessed with *Dog Years*. I really think we've figured out a nice way to make records, which sucks, 'cause now we're gonna have to throw that in the garbage and force ourselves to be a little more uncomfortable for the next one.

AU: *Matterhorn* was based on some of Sean's family history... are there any concepts or themes to *Dog Years*?

SS: It didn't start out with a thematic focus, but when we stood back and examined what the results of our writing were, clearly there seemed to be a thread running through all of it, and to us, that thread is The Rock. We've given our lives to this music. That's a bit melodramatic maybe, but almost all of the songs relate to some aspect of our personal histories in this band, or growing up as greasy-haired suburban heshers. We've reached an age where most people who play this kind of music start to get weary and move on to more normal stuff, like getting a serious job or a mortgage or what-have-you. We're still finding

ways to keep it fun and to hone our craft. I

guess it's in our blood.

AU: The cover art with the puppet might be my favourite album cover EVER! Who did it? Explain the idea behind it?

SS: Thanks. I'm pretty happy with the reaction the cover is getting. I built that puppet from scratch. We brainstormed this idea that the cover could have this weird, demented, feral-looking puppet on it, with a vaguely 70s or 80s kind of vibe, since we all grew up in the 80s. We wanted it to seem familiar, in some strange way. The main thing that drives us to play our music is some shared sense of fury buried inside us. Maybe we found a way to bring that fury to life. He's always around, waiting to be set off.

I'm not interested in making album covers for our music that fit too squarely into a genre thing. There aren't any rules. When we all agreed that the puppet thing was a good idea, it was all a matter of executing it properly. We had my little brother, [Endast frontman] James, take the pictures for the album cover. He really helped us flesh out the whole concept and make it actually real.

AU: I have had the pleasure of seeing you guys live, but for those who haven't, how would you describe a Great Sabatini show?

SS: We play loud, and we try to play as hard as possible. Expect volume and energy. On a good night, I hope we've managed to communicate something honestly with those in attendance, and with serious conviction. From time to time, it feels like we could make the ground open up and swallow everything, but that's just 'cause we are wielding a ton of volume... I've never seen us play,

though, so who knows how these little power trips appear to others, haha.

AU: We seem to be seeing a lot of new, heavier, slugger bands starting up in Canada. What would be your advice to a band starting out?

SS: Throw out whatever rulebook you feel you have to refer to. We're not reinventing the wheel or anything, but we try to challenge ourselves and stay honest, and a great way to do that is to disregard whatever cute little conventions might be tempting you.

*More information at
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SHREO SESSION

Shawn Rowbottom

Interview by Matt Gordon

Shawn is a rad dude, he's down for the cause and kills it. That's why I chose to interview him, that and he deserves some cred. Shawn has a photo in *Thrasher Magazine*, which is the highest calibre skate mag in the world, other than *Absolute Underground*, of course. We also touch on the elusive Sixside DIY under the bridge under the ground skatepark.

Absolute Underground: Hey Shawn, how have ya been? Can I interview you for *Absolute Underground*?

Shawn Rowbottom: Yeah dude, for sure.

AU: Props on your *Thrasher Magazine* photo, how did you find out you made it in the mag?

SR: One night I was chillin' with the lady sipping on some tea and BAM, Elijah Richard James Cleaver messaged me and sent me the photo.

AU: Who took the photo?

SR: My buddy Brandon MacDougall.

AU: What's the best trick for you at Sixside?

SR: One-footer grinds around the love seat or fakie thruster on the wall

AU: Nice, are we telling people where Sixside is?

SR: That's a big nope.

AU: If you could skate anywhere, where would you go and why?

SR: Orcas Island, Washington State. I would go for the park, camping and there's this one amazing lookout all human beings must experience once in their lives.

AU: Orcas Island Skatepark looks like paradise in footage... You ever skate the old park portion of Vic West skatepark? What's your favorite trick to do there?

SR: Back 180, new to old.

AU: Going on any skate trips this summer?

SR: Saltspring, Orcas Island, Tofino, and once it starts getting cold here, heading down the coast.

AU: Right on man, sounds like you're getting a lot of skating in this summer. Who else is rolling with ya?

SR: My women and my guitar on my back.

AU: Sounds like a new age folk song. Got any skater folk songs yet? I could get down with that.

SR: Ha, good idea, I'm in the midst of writing a punk folk album but my band, Speed Garbage, has lots of skateboarding-influenced songs.

AU: Nice, what are some of your song titles?

Shawn: 4 Barrel, Moonshine Country, Woke Up, Canyonero

AU: Cool man, is there anywhere we can hear them online? And any online skate links to check out?

SR: No recordings of Speed Garbage online, you gotta roll out to the Fenton Ranch to hear us. Yeah, for sure check out HeritageBoardshop.com... Type my name in on YouTube and it shows all the skate vids I have filmed and have been in. Also check out Concrete Wave, I have a buddy that is getting it legit again. And of course, www.Thrashermagazine.com.

AU: How many years have you been skating?

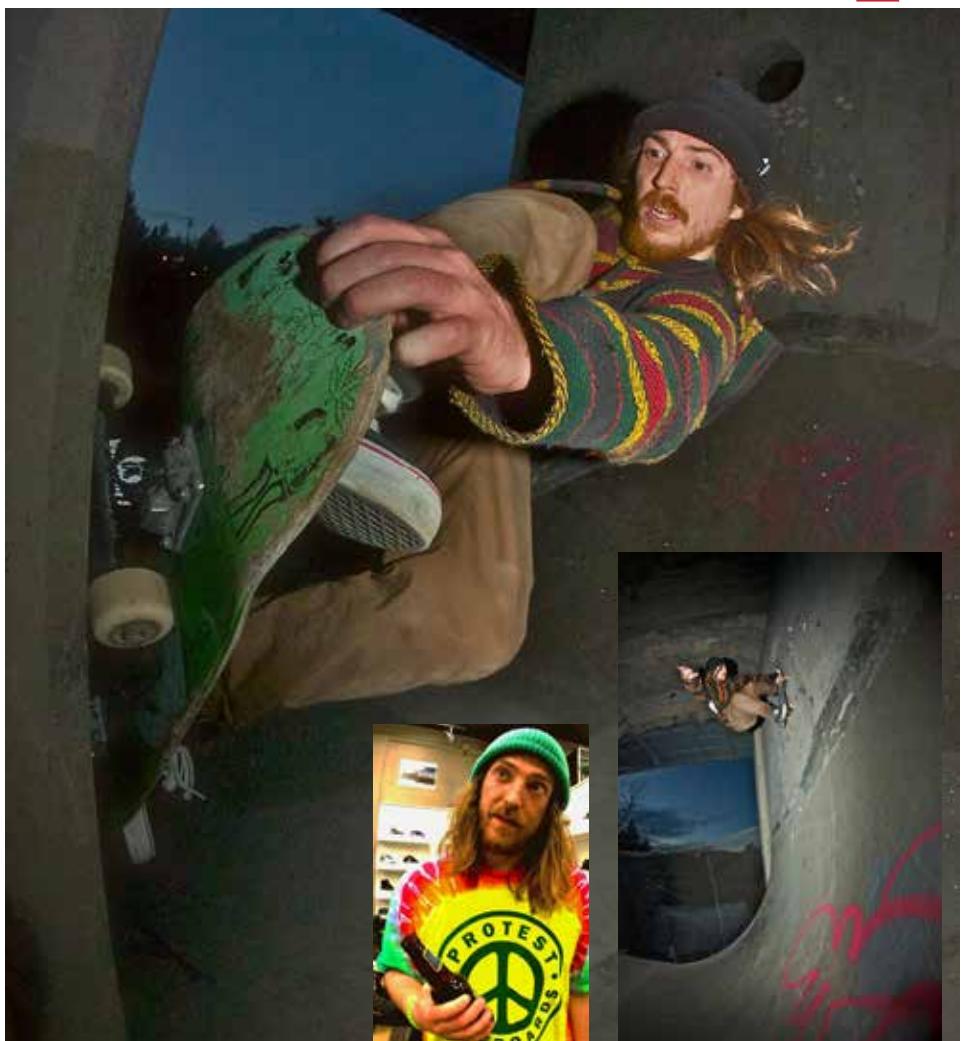
SR: Skating been on a board for twelve years, didn't start really skating 'til I moved out West, so about eight years.

AU: Anything else?

SR: Shoutouts to Sixside, Protest Skateboards, Heritage Boardshop, HR, Vans, Krew, LC.

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Punk Rock Bowling Weekend

By Alicia Gilmour

Set 'em up and knock 'em down!

Punk Rock Bowling took over the streets of Las Vegas once again this May, where you go to do one thing and one thing only: bowl... or not bowl, and cram as much live punk rock into one weekend as you possibly can.

It's four nights and three days of non-stop everything punk rock. It's made of dark and grimy bars that remind you of your hometown establishments, countless trips up and down Fremont to restock your tall can supply, and entertaining people-watching as the hilarity of a thousand punk rockers throw into the mix on the Las Vegas Strip unfolds. It's an awkward compound of glitz, glam and grunge, a beautiful sight for eyes like ours.

The tentative plan is always to see as many shows as possible, snap a few photos with your own personal legends and then, night after night, jump on the debauchery train, which seems to have always been a direct symptom of your love for this style of music. After a few rounds, Punk Rock Bowling becomes like a checkpoint in life, a reunion of sorts. Whether you're a JAK, a Dagger or a Turbojugend, you are a punk rock bowler. Time and time again, you book time off work to travel across the desert and reunite with some of the closest friends you've ever had, who just happen to



come in and out of your life for only these four days a year.

A gathering of this size provides a great reference to see where you're at in the scene. You can collaborate your opinions with like-minded people and realize your place within the madness. Whether you're an excited young scene-ster with a change of wardrobe for every day or a creepy old dude sporting the same merch shirt since the early 90s, an event like this highlights that we are all cut from the same cloth.

When a large scale event like this comes together, it also allows you to see all its derivatives. The music genre has experienced serious generational gaps and environmental influences from the beginning until now. The bands and fans that represent us as punk rockers are as different as the places and times that they originated. From Cock Sparrer to Good Riddance, NOFX to SNFU and OFF to Against Me!, the sounds

and messages are almost incomparable by some standards, yet they all provoke the same underlying feelings in all of us.

The festival's headlining shows continually lay down the foundations with classics like The Slackers, The Adicts, Face to Face, The Descendents and The Dwarves.

Although the festival itself is what draws us all to Vegas, as the years go on, like in any scene, with a little experience comes the discovery



of what lies in the shadows.

While the majority of bowlers lie poolside during the day, nursing their hangovers and leaking their hair dye into the pool water, there are free daytime movie premieres, poker tournaments, secret poolside concerts and skate ramp sessions.

Bloodied But Unbowed offered a free screening on the first day of the events – it's a seriously informative and entertaining documentary by Susanne Tabata about the original rise and fall of the punk rock community in Vancouver throughout the late 70s and early 80s. If you caught this movie and were Canadian, your actions over the course of the weekend seemed more justified, however far you stumbled from sensible.

Another side product was The Blue Tile Lounge. The venue launched its first appearance at Punk Rock Bowling and featured a parking lot party filled with a skate punk reunion that hosted legendary bands such as Johnny Rad, Faction, Drunk Injuns and JFA. A six-foot half-pipe sat behind the stage, while the Lifeblood Team and Stevie Cab himself proved it to be the most legendary session possible for Volume 1 of the event.

The "secret" VIP pool party, which there always seems to be a way into, showed everyone who snuck in through the open doors of the rooftop pool a serious fucking blast as Manic Hispanic did their make-up and paid tribute to the 80s, covering everything from Billy Idol to Madonna and ending with "Purple Rain".

No matter what gems you find throughout your day, whether it be hanging in some parking lot or backstage at the show, when nighttime falls and everyone is in their true comfort zone, the club shows go off; most nights there is more than one lineup to seek out in an evening. From Meat Men to Gang Green, Cro-Mags and an all-girl Descendents cover band (that was actually awesome), it's some of the best music you'll ever get the chance to be a part of. And it seems apparent that, no matter where you're from, everyone who is at this event loves seeing these bands play as much as you do.

As always in Vegas, as much as you think you know what to expect, there are always stories to tell. Stories like the gang fight outside of Hennessy's on the first night, or the night that Frostbacks got double-booked and took the stage at 5am and tore the place apart anyway, or watching the hockey game with Manic Hispanic, and seeing Chi Pig in his leather flight hat signing autographs at the Golden Nugget casino bar with a huge smile on his face. Anything can happen here, and you've come because you want it to.

Punk Rock Bowling is the heart and soul of what punk rock is. Here in Vegas, it showcases all its districts, forms, communities and faces, and although there are many differences, it is all punk rock here. At no other type of event do you get to share your love for the core of punk rock with all its family members, study its history and relish in its current state.

It's a rebellion, it's high-energy, it's skateboarding, it's awkwardness, it's music, it's style, it's an attitude and it's being hardcore. It's celebrating the life and times of punk rock. Celebrating all that we stand for, and all that we are capable of. And for a crowd like this and a celebration of this magnitude, only one town will do.

Viva Punk Rock Bowling in Las Vegas!





ALLEY ENCOUNTERS

Interviews by Ira Hunter

BC SMOKE SHOP



Absolute Underground: What team are you representing?

BS: BC Smokeshop! I'm a virgin Vegas bowler.

AU: How was your experience?

BS: Good. Next time we might have to get some hookers too, but male ones. The ladies, they were a little distracting.

AU: What was the craziest thing you saw this weekend?

BS: The girl giving the guy a handjob right by the bowling lane.

AU: How did you bowl?

BS: I did better than everyone on the team... I just wanna put that out there – virgin bowler, and I slayed.

AU: Did you drink every time you got a gutterball?

BS: I drank every time. Period. Really I think that was the method to the madness.

AU: Final words for children about bowling?

BS: Vodka-orange juice, drinking the night before, then eating burgers and nachos, that's how you become a winner. That's my advice.

ABSOLUTE UNDERGROUND



AU: What team were you on?

Schmitty: I was on Absolute Underground's team!

AU: How was your Punk Rock Bowling experience?

S: Paradise, basically. I would not come to Vegas if it weren't for Punk Rock Bowling. I would recommend it to anybody.

AU: What was the drinking-to-bowling ratio?

S: Drinking 100%, bowling... 40%. Every time a ball is bowled into the gutter, you're meant to take a drink. And that happened a lot today.

AU: And you've got a fresh tattoo, what does it say?

S: 'Merica Whip. It's a jar of Miracle Whip and the label is 'Merica Whip.



PHOTOGRAPHER

AU: What team were you bowling on?

P: I wasn't bowling, I was photographing teams.

AU: What were some of the highlights and lowlights?

P: Really great high fives and Bowling with strippers. Not side by side, bowling WITH strippers.

AU: Describe this for the people that have never been bowling with strippers.

P: Indescribable. There's a very large man and a very tiny stripper, and she would hold the ball, and he would pick her up and they would both go running down the lane, and he'd damn near throw her... then she'd pop the ball out and they actually did pretty good!

AU: How has this festival grown over the years?

P: Well it's definitely more diverse, but they actually had more costumes last year. I didn't see a single man in a tutu this year.

BOWL-KKAKE

AU: Who are we talking to and what is the name of your bowling team?

H: Henry from the Team Bowl-Kkake.



AU: Bowl-Kkake, tell me more.

H: We got second last year, weren't expecting that, and here we are again, hoping that maybe we can do it again!

AU: Describe what I'm seeing on your T-shirt...

H: Well, it's four pins bukkake-ing on a bowling ball.

AU: What's been your craziest bowling Vegas experience so far?

H: I haven't thrown into the other lane yet... we haven't gotten that crazy yet, but I think that we really want to hire some hookers for tomorrow if we do make it to the Finals, 'cause we're really jealous of that other team, they really set a great example.

AU: They got hookers?

H: Yeah, you saw them giving all the lap dances?

AU: No, I missed it. Tell me everything!

H: Here's how I see it. All the cool teams went to Sam's Town, right? All the rejects went to here and other lanes, and you know what, we took lemons and made lemonade out of it. We took this bowling alley and we brought whores, and that's amazing. So we're gonna do that tomorrow, and we're just going to distract the shit out of our competitors, and it's gonna work. I just hope that they're not too damn expensive.

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SPUN SKATEBOARDS

AU: How many beers did you drink last year?

SS: It wasn't last year, it was two years ago and it was 68 beers between four guys, three games of bowling, we know that. That was the only year we were in the playoffs, by the way.

AU: What's the name of your team?

SS: We're Spun Skateboards out of Huntington Beach, California and this is our third year in the tournament... first year we got 11th. Last year we blew and this year we're on the bubble so we'll see what happens. Here's what's cool: either you make it and you bowl the tournament, or you don't make it and you go to the pool and look at the girls.

Either way, you're a winner. That's Punk Rock Bowling.

AU: What was one of the craziest bowling stories you can share?

SS: We were the 60th team, the last team to make it, two years ago.

We played the Number One seed, and something happened, I rolled a 205 the other guy rolled a 196, and we ended up beating them without the handicap. Cameras everywhere, people high-fiving, all of a sudden bowling became my best sporting experience ever and it's embarrassing to say, but proud to say, I love it here. 300 bucks richer...



TURKEY JERKS

AU: What team are you bowling on?

TJ: Turkey Jerks

AU: Describe the Turkey Jerks.

TJ: Three strikes is a turkey.

AU: I had two of the three turkey strikes, people were chanting "turkey" and I fucked up. Too much pressure.

TJ: Yeah, we didn't get a turkey today.

AU: Best thing about Punk Rock Bowling?

TJ: The music.

AU: What bands are you stoked on this year?

TJ: Descendents, Cock Sparrer.



LAGWAGON & DUKES OF HAGGARD

AU: How was your bowling experience?

Lagwagon: It was good.

AU: How does such a big man bowl?

L: Very slowly. I got short shorts on.

AU: Your band Lagwagon played last year?

L: Yeah we are recording the new album right now.



AU: Who are you stoked to see this weekend?

L: I'm going to see ALL hopefully, and The Descendents, NOFX, and The Dickies.

AU: Tell me the craziest Vegas bowling story you can.

L: I got a picture with big fat titties the first day I was here, and then they took it off Facebook.... they had pasties.

AU: What team were you on?

L: The Dukes of Haggard.

AU: Oh that's a legendary team. Describe to the people what they missed.

L: My balls hanging out of my little Daisy Duke shorts.

SPEED HUMPS

AU: What's the name of your team?

SH: We're The Speed Humps

AU: Why are you called The Speed Humps?

SH: 'Cause we're awesome?



AU: What does it have to do with bowling?

SH: We throw the ball really hard, and it's fast.

AU: Where are you from?

SH: We're from Breckenridge, Colorado. We ride snowboards and... jump off cliffs and shit, that's what we do for fun. We listen to punk rock, and then every year we come to this and it's amazing.

AU: Describe what just happened for people that missed it.

SH: I think I missed it, man.

TWO IN THE PINK

AU: What bowling team are you on?

TP: Two in the Pink.

AU: Describe what I'm looking at.

TP: Two fingers holding a pink bowling ball.

AU: What's the best thing about bowling?

TP: Amazing nakedness, it was very liberating.





Armstrong Metalfest Preview

By Willow Gamberg

It's getting to be festival season again, and with that comes all kinds of great opportunities to catch some good, homegrown metal! For instance, coming up on July 18th and 19th is the Okanagan's own Armstrong Metalfest, a two-day affair of sun, beer, thrash wrestling and of course, metal from all over Canada!

Now in its sixth year, the Armstrong Metalfest was built from the ground up by metalheads for metalheads, and has garnered quite a following, becoming well-known for showcasing plenty of local talent, not to mention all the crazy metal events. Festival organizer Jesse Valstar expects

yet another amazing weekend this year, and assures us that all of our favourite events will be bigger and better than ever.

"This year is going to be stellar!" he says. "Thrash Wrestling is going to be killin' it again, the Saturday Morning Beer Helmet March is a go, the 100-Man Shotgun was larger than 100 last year, and I only expect it to be even bigger this year! Also there will be 36 unreal heavy metal bands from all over Canada over this weekend-long awesomeness!"

Valstar's enthusiasm is shared by hundreds of annual attendees, and indeed, by this particular writer as well – I attended last

year and had an insanely good time. The Thrash Wrestling in particular was impressive, if brutal – two contestants just beating the shit out of each other with anything that came to hand in a barbed wire ring. One of the drawbacks last year was the heat – intense, baking sunshine only enhances the dehydration brought on by excessive alcohol consumption.

Valstar assures me that this year they are working on a cooling station with shade, in addition to last year's life-saving sprinklers. Each year brings new developments and improvements to the process, he explains.

"[Over] the first five years, we learned a lot about how to make the fest work. Now we have a well-prepared team that understands each others' roles in making the festival become a success," he says. "If it weren't for the time and effort from each of the volunteers involved with the festival, then

I would imagine things would be a lot harder. In the end, it's totally worth it!"

This year's lineup highlights include Cryptopsy, Ancients, returning headliners Archspire, Black Cobra, last year's Wacken Champions Crimson Shadows, Death Toll Rising, West of Hell, XUL, Unleash the Archers, Striker, Kataplexis, Nylithia and many more.

Though the music is held indoors on two stages at the moment, Valstar hopes to make it a true Open-Air festival over the next few years. For now, he looks forward to seeing hundreds of familiar faces and meeting plenty of new attendees.

For more information and tickets, visit www.armstrongmetalfest.ca or check out the festival on Facebook.

Those looking to volunteer can contact organizers via the festival website: <http://armstrongmetalfest.ca/volunteer/>

If you can't make Armstrong, there are plenty of other festivals to check out this summer:

Calgary Metal Fest – June 5th-7th

Farmageddon – June 12th - 15th

Heavy Montreal – August 9th - 10th

Loud As Hell – August 29th – Sept 1st

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Wacken Metal Battle Canada Update

The winner of the Wacken Metal Battle Canada Final has been announced!

Five bands from four provinces were selected to compete for the ultimate prize – the chance to represent Canada at the world-famous Wacken Metal Battle in Germany later this summer.

Wacken Metal Battle Canada Competitors:

- Guest Headliner Skull Fist
- Mutank (Montreal)
- My Hollow (Toronto)
- Burning The Day (Toronto)
- Neck of the Woods (Vancouver)
- Exit Strategy (Calgary)

The difficult decision was bravely tackled by the following guest judges:

- Robb Reiner (Anvil)
- Noel Peters (Inertia Entertainment)
- Tim Henderson (Brave Words & Bloody Knuckles)
- Lindsay Schoolcraft (Cradle Of Filth)
- Jon Asher (Asher Media Relations)
- Adam Sewell (Riot Rock Management / Stereo Dynamite)
- Darrell Shelley (Scene Magazine)
- Drew Copland (Villainizer)

And the winner of the Wacken Metal Battle Canada is... Montreal's Mutank!

Congratulations! Good luck and have fun playing Wacken Open Air in Germany... We know you'll do Canada proud!

facebook.com/bonebrainsnotdemolishers
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Ancients

Interview by Milton Stille

Absolute Underground: So, you've been getting a lot of attention for Heart of Oak since it was released. Tell us about it. You recorded it back in 2012, and it wasn't released until last year. What were the reasons for that?

Kenny Cook: We recorded the record with the amazing Jesse Gander at The Hive in Burnaby in January of 2012. The reasons we had for waiting a year to release it was interest from labels, and we hadn't really sourced out the art and layout for the record when it was recorded, so it took some time to get all of that stuff in place before we could set a release date. A year seems like a long time to be sitting on a record, but we wanted to make sure everything was done to the best of our abilities.

AU: Right after its release, it seemed the world fell in love with you. How does it feel to have a record out that, it seems, no one intelligent has a negative thing to say about?

KC: It was quite flattering to get such a good response from people and the press. We mainly just record music that we love to play and for our own personal enjoyment; the fact that lots of other people were into it is a big bonus, and we would like to thank everyone who said nice things about us.

I know you can't please everyone all the time, so it's really cool to not have too much negative stuff said about the record.

AU: Its reception was quite certainly the galvanizing factor that led to a few pretty high-profile tours you participated in. What's it

take for a few dudes from Mission to hit the road? Give us a few memorable moments.

KC: First of all, you need a reliable vehicle that won't break down on you and force you to miss some shows, we learned that one real quickly. You need to have all of your merch sorted out and ordered, because in this day and age, it's the lifeline of touring bands that don't have huge budgets, and it really helps a lot for having the gas to get you where you need to be the next night. The most memorable of the tours we have done has got to be the Lamb of God tour. The crowds were massive and it gave us a really good idea of how to operate on that level. We had the chance to meet some really great people, especially the dudes in Decapitated. Those guys are the nicest Polish dudes ever, and we had a blast partying with them. The last show of that tour was my birthday and we got to play at Cain's Ballroom in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Let's just say there wasn't a shortage of whisky and it was a great ending to the tour for us!

AU: Alright, so this is probably what everyone's asking right now, and you're sick to death of talking about it, but... You are nominated for a Juno. How did it feel when you became aware of this? How does it feel to be competing for that Juno with the likes of Gorguts and KEN mode?

KC: It was crazy news, to say the least. I really didn't think that was even an option for us, so it was real nice to be recognized on a national level like that. There are some amazing records that we have to go up against and I will be really happy if Gorguts or KEN mode take it - I think both of those bands are so great and we're just happy to be a part of it alongside such killer bands.

AU: You've incorporated newer material in your most recent live sets. Is there a game plan in play for the next record?

KC: Yes, we have been playing a new tune at our last few shows. We felt that the local fans were probably getting tired of hearing the songs from *Heart of Oak* so we have a new one that clocks in around 12 minutes to hold them over until we get in the studio and record our next record. We don't have anything booked yet studio-wise, but I think we would all like to work with Jesse again. He is a real master at getting good sounds quickly and just a real pleasure to work with in general. We have a few more tours to do this year for *Heart of Oak* and I'm thinking we will finally get in the studio in the winter of this year or early 2015.

AU: I think one of the things that made *Heart of Oak* such a cohesive record was the fact that all these eclectic inspirations were coming together as such a harmonious confluence. Would you care to tell us what influences you all bring to the table personally?

KC: For me, I love all good music: I listen to a wide variety of stuff from classical and jazz to early progressive rock to death and black metal, just to name a few. [Mike] Hannay [drums] is pretty close to the same tastes as me; Chris [Dyck, guitar] is big in to 90s death and black metal; and Boon [Aaron Gustafson, bass] is a punk rock metal dude, from what I have gathered over the years.

For Ancients... I wanted to incorporate as many styles of music as possible into these songs, and try to do it tastefully. Once we got little Mikey on the drums, it all came together quite quickly, as he is a musical workhorse, and really puts the time and effort into his instrument.

AU: What approach do you take when it comes to writing the songs? Who writes what, and how does it come together?

KC: Writing basically just comes from playing guitar, for me. I never sit down and say to myself, "Okay it's time to write a song." I just play the guitar and if I come up with something that tickles the eardrum and that I can remember the next time I pick it up, then I have usually got something to build off of. When I'm combining parts of songs together, that usually takes the most time, just to make the transitions smooth from one part to the

next, so I usually sit on things for quite a while before I bring them to the band. Once the song is down and arranged with the band how we want it, then I come up with the melody for the singing and from there Chris puts words to the melody. He did a big part of the lyrical aspect of this last record.

AU: Plug us your other projects.

KC: Well, I play in another band called Black Wizard, who will be going across Canada this summer with Black Cobra and Ancients. We are really stoked to be doing a full Canadian tour for the first time with some great friends. It's gonna be sweet! I have also recently formed a band with some amazing people and musicians from the Vancouver area. We are called the Blood River Band and recently recorded an EP with the same guy that did the Ancients record. It's more of a southern rock feel and not metal at all, but it's really nice and refreshing to do something so different. Keep your eyes and ears open for that sometime later this year.

More information at:

<https://www.facebook.com/ANCIENTSRIFFS>

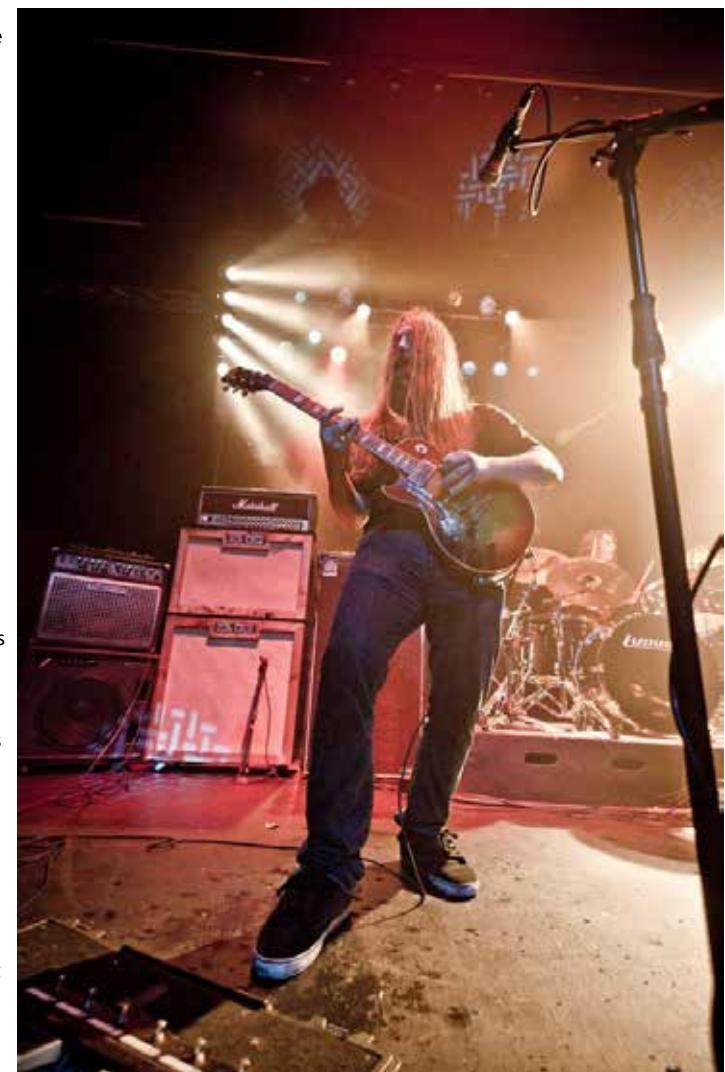
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PHOTO CREDIT: Milton Stille

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NILE

Interview by Lucius Blackworth

Broken Neck Radio's Lucius Blackworth interviews Karl Sanders for Nile for Absolute Underground.

Absolute Underground: Today we are at the Rickshaw Theater in Vancouver, BC. I'm sitting here with one of the heaviest bands on the fucking planet... Why don't you tell us who you are and who you play for?

Karl Sanders: My name is Karl and I play guitar in the band Nile.

AU: And how are you doing?

KS: Little under the weather.

AU: You guys have been on this tour for some time and have put a lot of kilometers on so far. Any issues coming over the border into Canada?

KS: Ah, we always have border

issues... but today there were a lot of other tour buses coming over, so we had to wait our turn.

AU: Now it's pretty common for metal bands to tour extensively... but why don't we see you guys here in Vancouver more often?

KS: Well this is our first time in Canada, we did take too much time to get here because of border crossing issues... and the amount of money they want from us in order to cross, because of previous legal issues.

AU: The new album [At The Gate of Sethu] has been out for a while now, how has the response been?

KS: I think the response to the album has been outstanding... it's been our best selling album to date.



AU: I loved the album. What keeps Nile inspired?

KS: We love metal, it's our life... it's what we do.

AU: Who do you hate the most, and why?

KS: George Bush... because in every interview for like eight years, he always came up when the interviewer ran out of stuff to ask.

AU: For all the gearheads out there, tell us about your stage rigs from top to bottom.

KS: [We're using] Dean guitars, Monster cables, Marshall cabinets, even some Kerry King Cabinets in there.

AU: Does your stage rig differ from your studio rig?

KS: Of course it does. It differs tremendously.

AU: When are you going to be hitting other parts of Canada?

KS: Not for a while yet, as I need to get some other legal issues resolved.

AU: What can we expect from Nile in the next two years?

KS: We hopefully will have the next

album done by the end of this year, should be out by the end of this year or early next year, and a tour right after its release.

AU: Thanks again... quick hypothetical question: you're in a plane crash, who do you eat first?

KS: Duh, the fucking bass player.

nile-catacombs.net/
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An advertisement for Cruzak Media featuring several music groups. At the top, it says "CRUZAK MEDIA". Below that is a poster for the band SNFU with the text "SET YOUR OPPONENTS INTO SNFU OLD FRUSTRATING PUNK ROCK" and "NEVER TROUBLE TROUBLE UNTIL TROUBLE TROUBLES YOU AVAILABLE ON ITUNES NOW!". To the right is a poster for "The Electric Revival" with the text "Pirate Radio".

An advertisement for Cruzak Media featuring two posters. On the left is a poster for "BULLET TREATMENT" with the text "THE MISTAKE FEATURING MEMBERS OF THE BRONX, SOCIAL DISTORTION AND SUICIDAL TENDENCIES". On the right is a poster for GWAR with the text "ISN'T THIS DISGUSTING" and "AVAILABLE ON ITUNES NOW!".

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An advertisement for Jessy GUNS ART featuring a stylized illustration of a woman's face and the text "JESSY GUNS ART" and "PEOPLES FANTASIES ARE WHAT GIVE THEM PROBLEMS - ANDY WARHOL". Below the text is the website "WWW.JESSYGUNSART.COM".

The logo for Spoon's Diner, featuring the word "SPOON'S" in large, bold, black letters. Below it is a smaller sign that says "Diner". The background is a bright green color.

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Harrington Saints

Interview by Chris Schwartz

Last November I found myself in San Francisco, almost by chance. I was heading back to Canada from a road trip up the coast with my new wife. After a day of site-seeing in the Bay Area, I headed on down to the bottom of the hill for the Pirates Press 9th Anniversary Party. I was floored by how great the Harrington Saints were. The bar was packed, the beer was cheap and the crowd was full of life and energy. Being a lover of street punk for the last 15-plus years, I immediately contacted the Saints about coming to western Canada when I got home. I got a chance to talk to a couple of the guys about their music and here is what they had to say:

Absolute Underground: Any upcoming releases?

Darrel Wojick (Vocals): Yes, we've had a single "in the can" for a bit now. Not sure if it will still come out as a single or not. Basically we will have SOMETHING new out relatively soon, and are looking at March/April for a release of either a full-length or a 10", something substantial.

AU: Best part of playing on the road?

DW: I enjoy the camaraderie with the guys, and seeing new places and meeting people from all over the world.

Mike C (Guitar): The fact we can buy a plane ticket and go different places in the world to play music is amazing to me.

AU: What are some of your guys' biggest influences?

DW & MC: We are a pretty mixed bag as far as musical tastes, actually. Common influences, in no order whatsoever, include Cock Sparrer, The Faces, Slade, Symarip, Toots & The Maytals, Agnostic Front, Sam Cooke, Blitz, Ramones. Get the idea? We are all over the place and we do draw inspiration from all of these.

AU: Coolest show you have played as a band?

DW: We are very lucky [in that] we've had quite a few. Playing with Cock Sparrer in Germany, the U.S., and England was a life-long dream accomplished!

MC: Rebellion Festival last year. Didn't know what to expect, but when we came out, the huge hall [was] filled with people. Amazing! Great response!

AU: Who typically writes your songs?

MC: Usually Darrel or Deuce [Miller - Bass] come

in with an idea, a melody, chord progression, etc. Then we all work it out together. Everyone gets to throw in ideas.

DW: Yeah, Deuce is good about bringing in songs that are nearly complete. I'm the jackass that has a melody and a key in mind to play the song (laughs). I like to let the guitar players work out music; I figure they are better than I am.

AU: Are all of you guys skins or were you in the past?

DW: Not all; it's funny how often we get asked that. Deuce and myself, you could say, identify with skinhead culture and enjoy it. I don't think anyone should walk around calling him or herself this or that. If others identify you as such, then you are. I've been into it for decades, and really dress and image don't concern me much anymore.

AU: Are you Bay Area natives?

DW: Only Forrest [Maestretti - Drums] and Jay [Shepard - Guitar]. I'm from Southern California. Deuce is from Kansas and Mike is a Jersey boy.

AU: Who is the "talent" in the band?

DW: Mike and Forrest are definitely the talent! We depend on them a lot!

AU: Who is the "band dad"?

MC: I'd say Hoss, our road warrior/driver/guitar tech is the "dad". He lets us get away with anything, though.

AU: Who is the "wild card"?

DW: Deuce is maybe the wild card, as he came later and we didn't really know what to expect. We only knew we liked and got along with him. He came in very prepared and to our surprise, he is quite a prolific songwriter. He was definitely a bonus and perfect addition to the band.

AU: Who is the "tough guy"?

DW: I think I like the title "Sergeant-at-arms"

[laughs]

MC: That works, Darrel is the guy who does all the booking, merch, hotel booking, contact with labels etc. So does that make him the "tough guy"?

AU: Anybody you want to shout out to?

DW & MC: Everyone that is helping us go up there! You guys are awesome! If it weren't for people busting their asses and making this scene work, we'd be nowhere. Thanks to everyone who pitches in!

Thanks and cheers to the boys in Bishops Green as well!



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 - June 13th Calgary at Palomino Social Club with Pagans of Northumberland, Kroovy Rookers, and Steelhead
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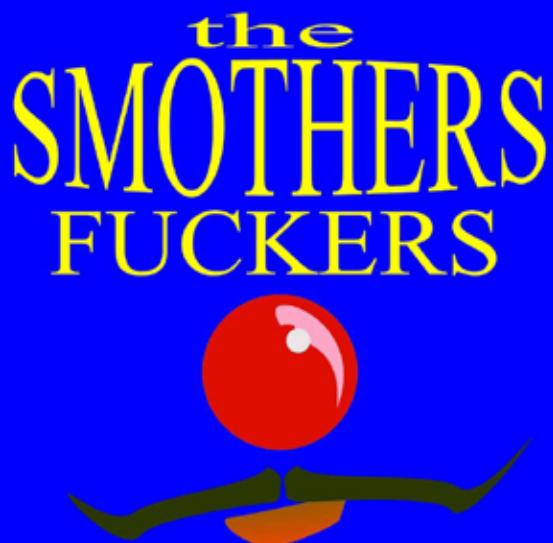
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The Smothers Fuckers

Interview by Mr. Plow

Absolute Underground: Who are you and what do you do?

Carl Smothers: Vocals and Membranophonist

AU: How do you come up with your ideas for songs?

CS: I lock myself in a chicken coop and take handfuls of mislabeled pharmaceutical medications. The song gods typically funnel ideas through me during that 48 hours. I emerge, covered in chicken shit with swollen breasts and burning urination, with five new songs.

AU: Is "Hot Pocket Bloodbath" based on real events?

CS: Yes.

AU: How do people react to your band name?

CS: With the same reverence one gives to Jesus.

AU: Have people ever been offended by your material?

CS: Absolutely. Our music is a lot like prison sex. You know it's going to happen, there is nothing you can do about it, and in the end someone is going to cry.

AU: "Your Band Sucks" sounds like an anthem every band should hear. Is it a "fuck you" toward certain bands, or are you just bitter and jaded with the music industry?

CS: That song can truly be applied to every band situation that exists. I won't say that it is towards a specific band, but let's just say that we have had a band in mind that allowed us to scope the song. I also believe I had two handfuls of BPH medicine for that weekend.

AU: How did you hook up with No Pants Records?

CS: It was after a nice dinner. No Pants Records, not wearing pants of course, rubbed their member all over my arm. It was strange and exhilarating all at once.

AU: Name three things you know about Canada.

CS: They have stronger beer. They are socialist. Some of them are fakie French fucknoses.

AU: Shamelessly plug your band here... website, etc.

CS: www.reverbnation.com/thesmothersfuckers
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Everything You Need to Know About Roller Derby

By Don McCaskill

Roller Derby is a hard-hitting sport that is back with a vengeance. In existence since the 1930s, the sport has surged and withdrawn over the decades and now it's seeing a new uprising. Retaining the colourful team names, like Prince George's Rated PG Rollergirls, and member names, such as The Fenzie, Hot X Buns or Maya Mangleyou of the 70s, the modern sport focuses more on athleticism over the bravado. The roller derby community hopes for a demonstration sport spot at the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo.



The Rules:

The game is played by two teams of up to twenty, on roller skates rather than roller blades. Each team puts five players on the track for a "jam". Both teams assign a "jammer" with a helmet cover marked with a star, whose job is to pass all the members of the opposing team on an oval circuit. Each opposition member passed during a two-minute-or-less jam scores the team a point. The

team with the most points at the end of the two half-hour periods wins the bout. Unlike hockey, soccer, football, etc, there is no ball, puck, or net; only the players, and only the jammer can score points.

Blockers, the four non-jammers, work to stop the opposing team's jammer from scoring by obstructing the path of the track with their body, legs and hips. Once a jammer passes at the hip, they are considered to have scored, and are no longer blockable by that opponent. Using arms and hands will result in a one-minute penalty.

While there are seniors, mixed and men's teams, it's the women's teams and leagues that are prevalent in the flat track derbies around the world. The Roller Derby Association of Canada sports 44 member leagues from coast to coast.

In Victoria, the Eves of Destruction league runs events from April to late September, traveling from Esquimalt to the four corners of the Pacific Northwest and hosting home games with their four teams up against visitors from as far away as Everett, Washington.

Absolute Underground: Why roller derby?

Bareleigh Legal #18 Calgary RDA All Stars: Why not? I had played most every other sport and wanted something new and exciting. I instantly became addicted and can hardly remember life before derby. I love that roller derby is a competitive, full-body contact sport for women. I love the athleticism, intensity, strategy, physicality and community... I pretty much love everything about it.

H-Bomb #12mt Faster Pussycats: What I like about roller derby is how included I feel. I'm not the strongest nor the fastest skater on my team, but everyone encourages and respects everyone else. I always feel like I'm welcome, and part of the team.

Derby keeps me healthy because of the physical exercise, but it also keeps my mind healthy and clear. If I've had a bad day at work, as soon as I get

out on the track I feel better because my mind can take a break from the everyday things that cause me stress.

I also love that roller derby challenges me both physically and mentally. It's a sport with a lot of rules, and you are constantly thinking and doing things at the same time. Derby is a combination of strategy, strength, skill and teamwork.

Cat the Conqueror #6969 Derby Debutantes: Roller derby is physically challenging, [requiring] endurance and strength, and also mentally challenging with all of the strategies to learn, as you are always playing offensively and defensively in each jam.

Ruin #98 Cut-Throat Car Hops: I love that there is so much going on in roller derby that it's impossible to think of anything else while playing or practicing. The best thing after a stressful day is to go to practice and forget about everything else and just work hard. I also love testing my resilience: getting hit over and over again and knowing that I can still get up every time and continue working with the team. It's really powerful to learn how strong I am, both mentally and physically when I'm put to the test.

AU: How did you get involved?

Ruin: I spent a couple of seasons watching the games at Tri-Wood Arena. It looked so exciting, and something in the back of my mind told me that it was something I could do. In the fall of 2012, CRDA held tryouts for new skaters and I decided to see if I was any good on skates. It was way more difficult than it looked, but I loved every minute of the tryouts and the boot camp. Afterward, I was then allowed to join the Fresh Meat Team in January of 2013. I spent several months learning all the skills I'd need - stopping, falling, and basic footwork. Once I passed the initial benchmark test, I was allowed to join the Smash Squad and then skate with the rest of the league. I got to know many of the skaters and the different house teams over the summer and then by September I was drafted to the Car Hops. I've spent the time since improving my skills and learning how to work as a team.

Dani Darko #28 Riot Girls: I was chatting with my friend one day, and she told me that she was going to Fresh Meat with the Eves of Destruction to write an immersion journalism piece on the sport. I thought she was crazy, but I immediately told her I was coming with her. I ordered my skates the next day, and we started skating in parking lots at UVic.

I started in Fresh Meat with the Eves of Destruction, but failed my first time through the basic skills test (I was really out of shape, had some health issues to deal with, and had never roller skated before). After that, I decided to become an official, and learn the sport better, while I worked on some fitness and lifestyle changes. I've since become a lot more athletic and active, which made it much easier for me to pass my basic skills after moving to Vancouver. I'm now in my second season as a player, and loving it.

AU: What advice do you have for those looking to join?

H-Bomb: Start skating now. Our league has try-outs in September for our annual Fresh Meat program, which is basically a four-month long

rookie training camp.

You can also join a group called Raw Meat Vancouver, which is a year-round, drop-in skating group where you'll learn the basics of roller skating and the rules of roller derby. Raw Meat is great for the months leading up to Fresh Meat, or for those who simply need a bit more on-skate time before trying out for Fresh Meat.

As long as you're a woman and 19+ years of age, you're welcome to join roller derby. We have skaters of all ages, sizes, and skill levels. Don't let fear or anxiety get in the way of you joining derby. We are all there to have fun, be healthy, and meet new friends. People are there because they want to be there, not because they have to be there.

AU: What are the risks?

Dani Darko: Like any full-contact sport, there is definitely the risk of injury. Ankle breaks and MCL tears are on the higher end of the scale, but bumps and bruises are really common. Personally, I've sprained my wrist, had a large calf muscle contusion, and gotten 11 stitches and an amazing black eye from my glasses breaking during a scrimmage. I don't wear glasses to play, anymore!

Cat the Conqueror: Risks are, you're addicted to the sport and you'll want to play all the time,



which is why there really are derby widows.

Injuries happen in a full-contact sport but we do what we can to avoid them by having a full training program for fresh skaters. Also, before they can play with us they must pass WFTDA (Women's Flat Track Derby Association) minimum skills test. We wear elbow, wrist, and knee-pads, gaskets, mouth-guards and helmets anytime we are on skates.

Even with strict safety precautions, accidents happen: anything from bruises, sprained knees, broken ankles, and concussions. This is why we have seven referees at each game and medics to keep people safe.

PHOTO CREDIT: Don McCaskill/NightShadows.ca

Pages to check out:

RollerDerbyCanada.ca

EvesOfDestruction.com

TerminalCityRollerGirls.com

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Comeback Kid

Interview by Ira Hunter

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most infamous for?

Jeremy Hiebert: This is Jeremy Hiebert and I might be most infamous for being possibly the greatest NHL player to never play a real hockey game.

AU: Who else is in the band? Any previous bands of note?

JH: Well right now it's just Andrew Neufeld and myself that are the remaining original members, and in the last two years we've had a few changes. Stu Ross, formerly of Misery Signals and Living With Lions, has been playing guitar with us since 2012. Ron Friesen, formerly of Stick to Your Guns and Grave Maker, started playing bass with us last summer and with the recent departure of Kyle, Jesse Labovitz of No Warning has started playing drums with us and we are currently mid-way through his first tour.

AU: Please give us a brief band history.

JH: Andrew, Kyle and myself started jamming in Kyle's bedroom in 2000 and started writing songs with Scott Wade - we put out our first demo in 2001. We played a bunch of local shows and recorded our first full-length in 2003, called *Turn It Around*. We put out *Wake The Dead* in 2005,



driven, fast and pretty heavy.

AU: The band just released their first studio album in four years, *Die Knowing*. What can you tell us about it?

JH: It is probably our most aggressive-sounding record today... [it's] quite heavy, especially the first half of the record. I think it showcases the heavier side of the band without sounding one-dimensional.

AU: Who produced your latest album? What record labels are you on?

JH: Kyle Black produced our latest record. The new record is out on Distort in Canada and Victory Records worldwide.

AU: What are the songs about? Is there a main theme running through the album?

JH: As I am not the lyric-writer, I am not going to go into what all of the songs are about, but I think as far as a theme goes, it just kind of goes

Broadcasting... in 2007, did a documentary and live show DVD that came out in 2008 and then two more full-lengths, *Symptoms + Cures* in 2010 and *Die Knowing* in March of this year.

AU: Describe your sound for the deaf people reading this.

JH: I feel like I don't have much of a point of reference or am hardly qualified to attempt that, but I guess it would just sound very guitar-

with where our previous records have gone; push yourself, pursue your dreams, don't be scared to be different or do things differently.

AU: Canadian tour plans?

JH: We will be doing a Canadian tour in May of this year and are very excited to do it with this record.

AU: What can the people expect from your live show?

JH: They can expect raw energy. We don't have a big lighting or stage show, with backing tracks and all that. It's just the five of us sweating it out, playing some of our favourite songs from each record live and feeding off of the crowd [while we do] it.

AU: Tell us something you don't want your mother to know.

JH: Now why would I do that, and risk her seeing this?! Haha well, I guess she wouldn't be too psyched on how much I used to drink. I've toned it down quite a bit in the last little while, but she absolutely hates alcohol, so I try not to be a jerk and let her in on that too much.

AU: If you were going to start a cover band, what band would you choose?

JH: Hmm, that's a tough one... Weezer songs, especially the older stuff, seem fun, so maybe them.

AU: Secret to success?

JH: I don't really know. Hard work and keeping at it even when frustration sets in, or when things start to seem boring or repetitive, is probably a factor. Being in a band and touring for over a decade is not always fun, but at the end of the day you are taking your art on the road to share with other people, and that is very rewarding.

AU: Any big announcements to share?

JH: Not at the moment. With the new record just out, we are just focused on touring right now but we're always throwing around ideas, so always stay tuned for that kind of stuff.

AU: What's the meaning behind the band's name?

JH: The name Comeback Kid actually comes from a headline in a newspaper when Mario Lemieux

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was coming back from what seemed a career-ending back injury. Seemed kind of like the positive vibe we wanted to have with this band.

AU: What are the biggest influences on your sound?

JH: I guess mostly stuff that we grew up listening to, but also some more current stuff. It can be anything from metal to hip-hop to rock to electronica. It's funny how certain things can manifest themselves in our music sometimes.

AU: Does the band get many groupies looking for meaningless sex after the shows?

JH: Nah we're not really that kind of band. Maybe if we were 15 years younger there would be more of that, or if we wore makeup and had those shitty flavour-of-the-month band hair cuts, or had choreographed moves on stage, but no, that is not the case. I mean, sure, there is always going to be an element of that around music for whatever reason, be it country music, death metal or folk, but it's not like we're The Beatles or anywhere near that, haha.

AU: Is it best to get drunk or stoned before taking in your show, or is it more of a straight-edge experience?

JH: I can only speak for myself, but yeah, I definitely prefer playing sober. I just have never felt comfortable playing under the influence, so it pretty much never happens.

AU: What is the ultimate goal of the band?

JH: I guess it would be just to share our music with as many people as we can through recordings and playing live. We love creating and touring, so we feel very lucky to have been doing this for so long.

AU: Final words?

JH: Nothing but gratitude to those that love and appreciate what we do. We know it's not for everyone, but we're always happy to share what we do with those that are into it.

More information at:

www.comeback-kid.com/

<https://www.facebook.com/Comeback.Kid>

Absolute Album Reviews

Expain- Just the Tip
Self-Released



When you're performing in a genre such as technical death metal, it's important to keep a stiff upper lip and a grim avoidance of anything that may become a laughing matter. But when you think about it, the term "technical death metal" is so descriptively honest, it just begs to be held in contempt; Expain seems to be doing just that, along with other cool things.

Within their use of the usual pyrotechnics associated with groups like Revocation or Spawn of Possession, I spot a wry playfulness that keeps the tracks rolling like a comic's stand-up routine at a Monster Truck rally. Of course, these aren't one-liner jabs full of irreverent cheese- we're talking blistering neoclassical shredding with a faux jazzy vibe and thundering militaristic stop-start rhythms, breaking into even more explorative Jaco Pastorius-style bass lines.

Their complex poly-math riffs mix quite naturally with their more old-school leanings in the form of punkified gallop drumming consistent with the early days of thrash. There are also enough quiet breaks to qualify them as creatures of the prog. I love bands that set out to spook preconceived ideas of what can happen in a 40-minute metal album and, after giving *Just the Tip* a listen, so will you!

-Dan Potter

Triptykon - Melana Chasmata
Century Media Records



Fans of the pillar of metallic strength that is personified with the name Tom G. Warrior have been patiently forging their swords and shields of burning hot steel in anticipation of the third declaration from this mighty commander. I use the war analogy because it is the most tangible, but in reality this record exhales a form of intense metaphysical energy that is quite hard to describe.

More angular than its predecessors, this full-length packs a Scandinavian wallop early on, beginning with an otherworldly, high-pitched screech right from the get-go. What follows is a set of artfully constructed odes to self-struggle leading to ultimate victory. The journey is both exhausting and invigorating at the same time, due to the bellowing voice of Mr. Warrior, which cuts across an eerie gothic atmosphere, always sounding wise from walking in the fire.

The guitar interplay is extraordinary, with sustained notes that tend to ring gloriously like air raid sirens. But again, the struggle is emphasized as being from within. Triptykon are pure genius at making the listener feel this display of personal internal wrath, whether it's from the delicate, quiet-as-a-whisper moments of true haunted being, or the intense, high-octane thunderclaps straight from the mouth of Zeus. Pointing this self-reflection outward is clearly strength beyond strength, and it is truly an honour to have witnessed it.

-Dan Potter

Throne Of Vengeance- Live Evil
Self-Released



The leadoff track, "Black Eye", is an awesome Maiden-like anthem with a super catchy melody that still maintains that hard edge found in modernist metal. It's good these guys know that you ain't metal if you don't have any songs about the importance of integrity or the unease that permeates this faltering world, because they cover these topics really well and in the most painless way possible: by rockin' the fuck out.

"All in the Way" has a Pantera-meets-Children Of Bodom vibe with a big shout-out chorus and guitar lines that rip across the chord progressions, creating super devil horn-saluting tension. The instrumental breaks really take you far out on a journey, adding a lot of depth to the songs in general, and then somehow you're driven back to a bitchin' singing break.

I'd say all their songs have the equal ability to be super-feel-good fist-pumpers! Be their guest and you will hear all the cool influences in metal, from Maiden through the thrash days and up to the most recent in chart-topping heavy acts. This album has a cool progression that goes from anthem-laden power jams to more hard-edged groupings of songs. The throbbing bass lines really stand out on the album highlight for me, "Live Evil", which has a dirty Alice In Chains-like groove complete with dark and moody guitar playing that swirls around a forceful wail that only the best singers in symphonic metal can muster up.

These guys may sit on their imaginary thrones of vengeance and write hit choruses with some of the heaviest of heavy metal grooves around, dreaming of sweaty appreciative crowds, but with the release of this album, they had better start thinking about getting their craniums measured for more official crown fittings.

-Dan Potter

Psychotic Gardening- Hymnosis
Self-Released



If a giant sinkhole opened up and all those wicked creatures that lived inside the hollow Earth crept out to devour humankind, this album is what would be playing in their headphones. Bellowing in your face with both a belt-bursting growl and a high witch rasp, the lead screamer fronts this band like evil protects the cliffs surrounding the fortress of Isengard.

I love the track "Defile", it has plenty of nuclear-tipped riffs that remind me of Hatebreed at the height of their brutality. This death-infected thrash style is definitely their strongest root to try to pull up. Thunderous gallops easily turn into Howitzer-calibre blast-beats, which makes me wonder why there isn't a warning label on this disc that reads, "May lead to extreme headbanging, resulting in spinal and/or neck injuries."

The highlight for me, though there be many, is the track "Genome Degradation", where a depth of influence comes out to play, creating a fairly unique fusion of heaviness. Twisted wah guitar slithers underneath a thick canopy of Panzer-division-readied riffage as the heavy-as-fuck vocals stay fucking heavy and bark out deathly growls like a clan of Sumerian warriors with a battle field victory in sight.

-Dan Potter

Bushwhacker- Fish Guy
Self-Released



This one-track, 20-minute EP starts off with a labyrinth of complex riffs kind of like a heavy metal movement of the Rites of Spring. As it unfolds, I'm reminded of the ambition found in the younger tech-headed bands like Between The Buried And Me, but I sense a deeper maturity usually found in the philosophical traveler groups such as Isis or Sleep. They find lots of space for intricate and dramatic instrumental interplay and for me it all engages in the right place at the right time.

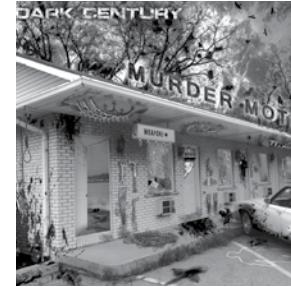
These accoutrements aren't tacked on for the sake of it- the gargantuan weight of musicianship functions, dare I say, like Meshuggah's / by pulling you inside the music and always keeping you guessing about what's behind the next door. The collage of styles, consisting of elements best described as progressive 70s rock, modern

death metal and a little bit of indie experimental music in the form of Mogwai, really takes you on a drive... this stuff would definitely be good for a cross-Canada road trip, synced to start playing right after Rush's *Hemispheres*.

Fish Guy comes to a close with a big stadium-rock-star-excess guitar solo that is both spooky and pleasant. As the instruments crash together one final time and the howl of an un-kept universe takes over, I recognize that this structure of song usually deserves a lot of ridicule for its pomposity. But this band's unique vibe and well-endowed musical chops make it a fairly refreshing listen, whether you long for the "It's All Good!" 70s or are digging the never-ending complexity of now!

- Dan Potter

Dark Century – Murder Motel
Self-Released



Dark Century is a Montreal band that has been around for the last ten years or so. They just released their second album, called *Murder Motel*, in April. They have fused a grind and hardcore thing in the past with a humour component about bacon and zombies, which I understand, as most people like bacon and zombies. In the words of the band, they are "mosh-metal" or "mosh-death metal".

It all starts off with death metal. Straight from the first song, they have the growl and the howl from the first minute in. Track two gets the guitar chugging going with the fast-tapping drums. The term "mosh-metal" is starting to make sense at this point. I'm not French, but I'm pretty sure the song is about bacon. Number five, "Ice Breaker", has a nice slow, grinding feeling to it and a story about making people into a sausage lunch special, I think? "Kill the Crowd" is a pretty catchy track that was released a year or more ago and has a mildly entertaining video on YouTube. "Mosh-Test Dummies" is the obvious beer-drinking party song that any bacon-loving metal band needs to have. The title track has kind of a cheesy feel to it, and I mean that in the best way. Kind of like a campy horror film filled with gore and a good guitar riff.

This is likely the first death metal release I've listened to that had that many food and eating references. But it was mostly in a language I barely understand and about a kind of meat I don't eat, so... Anyway, it's a good example of low-tech death metal. In a reference to bacon, this music is fat and crunchy, and if I could work a grease pun in here, I would. It feels like the kind of music that would work really well in a sweaty basement party where you drink a lot of someone else's cheap beer.

-Michael F. Carnage

Hollow is a symphonic black metal or melodic death metal band (depends who you ask), hailing from Montreal. They've been around since 2009 and been through the disappearance and death of a founding member. Music kept them together and they soldiered on through shows and the making of an EP. They are now ready to release a full-length album. This whole album has been recorded straight off the floor, with no triggers or digital tricks, in hopes of it having a more early nineties feel and sound. As soon as the first song starts, you get the Cradle Of Filth vibe from it. Keyboard- and vocal-wise, the influence is pretty easy to hear in the first two songs. By the third song, "A New Life", the melodic death elements start to show, with the vocals getting more growly. After that, the songs start to progress into a mix of the two styles, like a keyboard intro playing into melodic death-y guitar riffing and growls. "Sunriser" has a good aggressive feel to it with guttural vocals and a fast but heavy pace straight through. As this album goes on, it leans more towards the death and melodic end, with symphonic styles being used a little less, but this ties in with the clean vocal and choir interludes. And as much as there's less keyboard, you still get little bits of piano here and there.

If I had just heard the first song of this release, I would have thought it was just another Cradle Of Filth song. Throughout the album, the band did progress and diversify, though, so every song didn't end up sounding the same; they added more layers and elements to the latter songs with shared vocal duties and solo and piano work. If you like your black metal raw and your death metal brutal, this might not be your thing. On the other hand, if you like keyboards mixed in with a little choir and Cradle Of Filth or Dimmu Borgir from the 1997-2004 era, check this out for sure.

-Michael F. Carnage

Portrait – Crossroads
Metal Blade Records



Portrait is a classic metal band that formed in Sweden in 2006. They've had a good reception since they started, with a reputation for hard work and great live shows all over Europe. There's been a few line-up changes but they have managed two full-length releases and three EPs. After a few more changes and a ton of festival dates that saw them performing with hundreds of other bands for thousands of people, the next album was ready to go. This one is titled *Crossroads*, and the band calls it their most important work to date.

After two minutes of classical guitar intro, the second song starts off galloping. The vocals have a great Diamond/Halford feel to them... mix in some solid twin guitar and you've got some wicked 1983 going on. Track four, "In Time", has wicked lead harmonics over rhythmic riffs that gives the song a kick. Number five, "Black Easter", has a kickin' bass line that really makes you want to headbang - good and high-tempo, with great guitar interplay. There is some pretty solid guitar play and songwriting on display in the next few songs. There's just enough mix of riffs and hooks to make these two songs catchy, yet still interesting to listen to. They left the mellow song for the end in "Lily". Well, the

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Absolute Film Reviews

Godzilla (2014) Legendary Pictures

Godzilla, the King of the Monsters, is stomping back into the multiplexes after a ten-year hiatus, but this *Godzilla* is a little different from the one you've known in the past. Directed by Gareth Edwards (*Monsters*) and starring Brian Cranston (*Breaking Bad*), Aaron Taylor-Johnson (*Kick Ass*) and Ken Watanabe (*Batman Begins*), the newest incarnation of *Godzilla* has a great cast and crew, but does it all add up to a great film? First, I want to say that I am a "giant" Kaiju fan, and I especially love *Godzilla*. I was really excited, although somewhat apprehensive, about seeing this film after being sorely disappointed by *Pacific Rim*. It seems like American film companies just don't know how to handle giant monster movies. But Gareth Edwards, along with screenwriters Max Borenstein and Dave Callaham, actually spun a pretty entertaining story. And that's saying a lot, since the majority of North American monster movies have a really terrible human

aspect to go along with the mediocre monster action. This new *Godzilla* has a fun and, at moments, touching story. The film's human story feels very reminiscent of *Gamera 3: Revenge of Iris*, while also paying homage to the original *Gojira* from

1954. That, along with the larger-than-life monsters destroying cities while battling each other, made this



Absolute Album Reviews (continued)

whole song isn't mellow, but it's nine minutes long, so it has a lot of room to move between the ballad-y beginning, the epic charging middle and the mellow ending.

If you're a fan of metal from the early to mid-eighties, I think you'll be into this. It has a feel of White Witch or maybe a little first-wave Dickinson. The songwriting and structure feel like they were written and recorded in an old studio; there was a lot of thought put into making sure this wasn't just another throwback-sounding album. I can't really recommend just one song to show you what the album is all about. They all fit the mold, but all in different ways. So get out your patched denim vest and bang your head.

-Michael F. Carnage

Dust Bolt – Awake the Riot Napalm Records



First off, the front cover artwork immediately screams 1980's era thrash with the 'nuke em, Toxic Avenger feel, and the music can back that up. Stating in their press release that they are on the heels of their Bay area heroes, any Exodus, Slayer or Metallica fan

would immediately throw this disc on their heavy rotation.

Hailing all the way from Germany and formed 2006, these guys break finally came in 2012 where they won the Wacken Metal Battle earning a spot at the WOA festival. Signing with Napalm records led to a tour spot with Obituary, and were named Metal Hammer's Best Newcomer at their 2013 awards show.

Some would say these guys sound just like Slayer, and to me that is nothing but a good thing. With an average age of 21, these dudes are more than half the age of most of the big 3 thrash acts, ensuring we will be bashing and thrashing well after the initial wave of thrash inevitably begin to pack it. Well done boys.

-Chadsolute

one of the better non-Japanese giant monster films. And the score was amazing! It was easily my favourite part of the film. Alexandre Despault did an outstanding job of making the music its own character in the movie. When I watch movies, I don't just watch them. I often look for interesting lighting techniques and cool new camera angles that I haven't seen before, but what I really do is listen. I love hearing an amazing score that moves the film along, sometimes even more so than the actors themselves. And the score in *Godzilla* is mind-blowing. When the scene is tense, the music is tense, when *Godzilla* is destroying San Francisco, the music is moving along with him. Having said all that, I do have some complaints about the picture: first off, the monsters themselves are done digitally instead of the classic men in rubber suits smashing through miniature cities. I'm a practical effects nut, so stuff like this will always bother me, even if the special effects are incredible. Don't get me wrong, the effects are very good in *Godzilla*, they're just not my cup of tea. There are also a few eye-rolling moments that take away from the seriousness that Gareth Edwards was trying to come across with in the picture. But this is a *Godzilla* film, so I can't fault it for being somewhat cheesy at times. This film does tower over that atrocity of a feature that came out in 1998, literally. The *Godzilla* in the new film is at least 300 feet tall, as opposed to that 150-foot-tall "thing" in the Emmerich film. And *Godzilla* battles other giant monsters, which is what everyone going to see this film wants! Overall, I had a good time watching the new *Godzilla* and will most likely see it again before I buy it on Blu-Ray. It definitely wasn't *Destroy All Monsters*, but it was still worth checking out. My last thought on this new version of the Big G is that it really didn't need to be in 3D. There is way too much story and not enough action to make for a good 3D movie. If you are thinking of checking out *Godzilla*, save your money and see it in 2D.

- Cody No Teeth

Late Phases Dark Sky Films

Hot on the heels of *Here Comes the Devil* and *The ABCs of Death* comes director Adrian Garcia Bogliano's newest film, *Late Phases*. This film caught me completely off guard as I was not expecting anything and in fact, before viewing it, I hadn't really heard anything about the film.

Late Phases stars Nick Damici as Ambrose, a blind war vet that is forced by his son Will (Ethan Embry) to move into an old folks' community. Ambrose is introduced to his neighbour who, later that night, is brutally murdered by a giant werewolf-like creature. The creature then busts into Ambrose's

house and kills his seeing-eye dog before Ambrose scares the thing off with his trusty hand cannon. The local law shows up to investigate the murders and is convinced that it's just some wild dog that is living in the woods that surround the community. But Ambrose has a different theory and takes matters into his own hands. *Late Phases* was a whole lot of fun and had me laughing and cheering along while I was watching. The creature effects are mostly practical, which make the film feel like an 80s-style werewolf feature; the *American Werewolf in London* homage is one of the shining points of the film. Add the older gentleman hunting the creatures down to protect his home and you get this great midnight movie. It also has a spectacular cast including Nick Damici (*Stake Land*), Ethan Embry (*Vegas Vacation*, *Cheap Thrills*) and Tom Noonan (*Robocop 2*, *House of the Devil*). The film has this almost "Charles Bronson vs. the Werewolf" feel to it that I absolutely loved, and the main actor was perfectly cast in his role. It has some funny moments, as well as some really gory set pieces, plus the writing and acting is top-notch for such a small budget film. I hope *Late Phases* gets some recognition and horror fans out there get to see it, because it really is a diamond in the rough. If you are like me and hate digital effects in modern horror, then you should seek this film out any way you can!

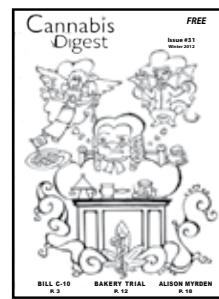
- Cody No Teeth



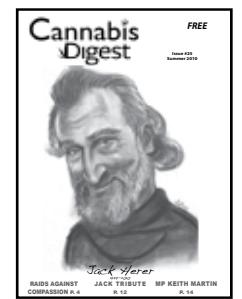
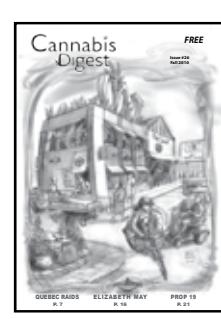
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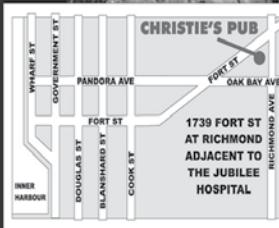
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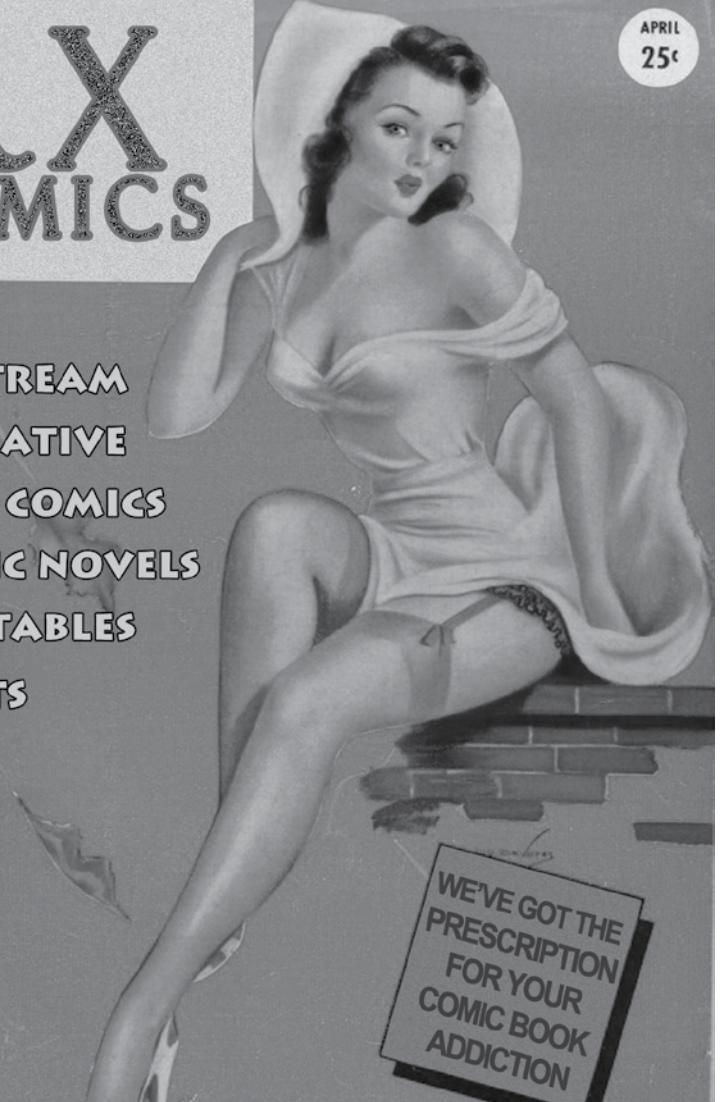

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Absolute Live Review

Behemoth, Goatwhore, 1349 & Inquisition

The Rickshaw Theatre
Vancouver, BC, May 2nd, 2014

This year's Metal Alliance Tour certainly was a night to remember. Fevered hordes of fans lined up outside Vancouver's own Rickshaw Theatre (situated in one of the province's most notorious neighborhoods), some slathered in traditional Scandinavian corpse paint, added an element of menace well before the doors even opened.

The opening acts certainly did their jobs, pumping the crowd up and preparing everyone for the satanic assault of the headliner, Behemoth. Goatwhore's frontman struck metal

pose after metal pose flawlessly, without any noticeable effect on his voice. 1349 conjured wild and chaotic images befitting the Norwegian black metal history of the early 90s.

Then the lights went out. A slow chilling drone overtook the room as Behemoth appeared through a thin layer of fog. Enter Nergal, sporting a pair of flaming torches, as he carried out a very theatrical ritual to begin the show. The crowd exploded forth its energy immediately, erupting into a mosh pit as the first song commenced. Halfway through their set, Behemoth unleashed their new satanic litany of fury, "Ora Pro Nobis Lucifer", and sent the room reeling into a swirl of light, blast beats and

vocals the Dark Lord himself would be proud to have singing his praises. Behemoth never disappoints and, indeed, they live up to the task of spearheading a new era within the metal community. All hail the mighty Behemoth!

-Adam VanThiel

Absolute Comix

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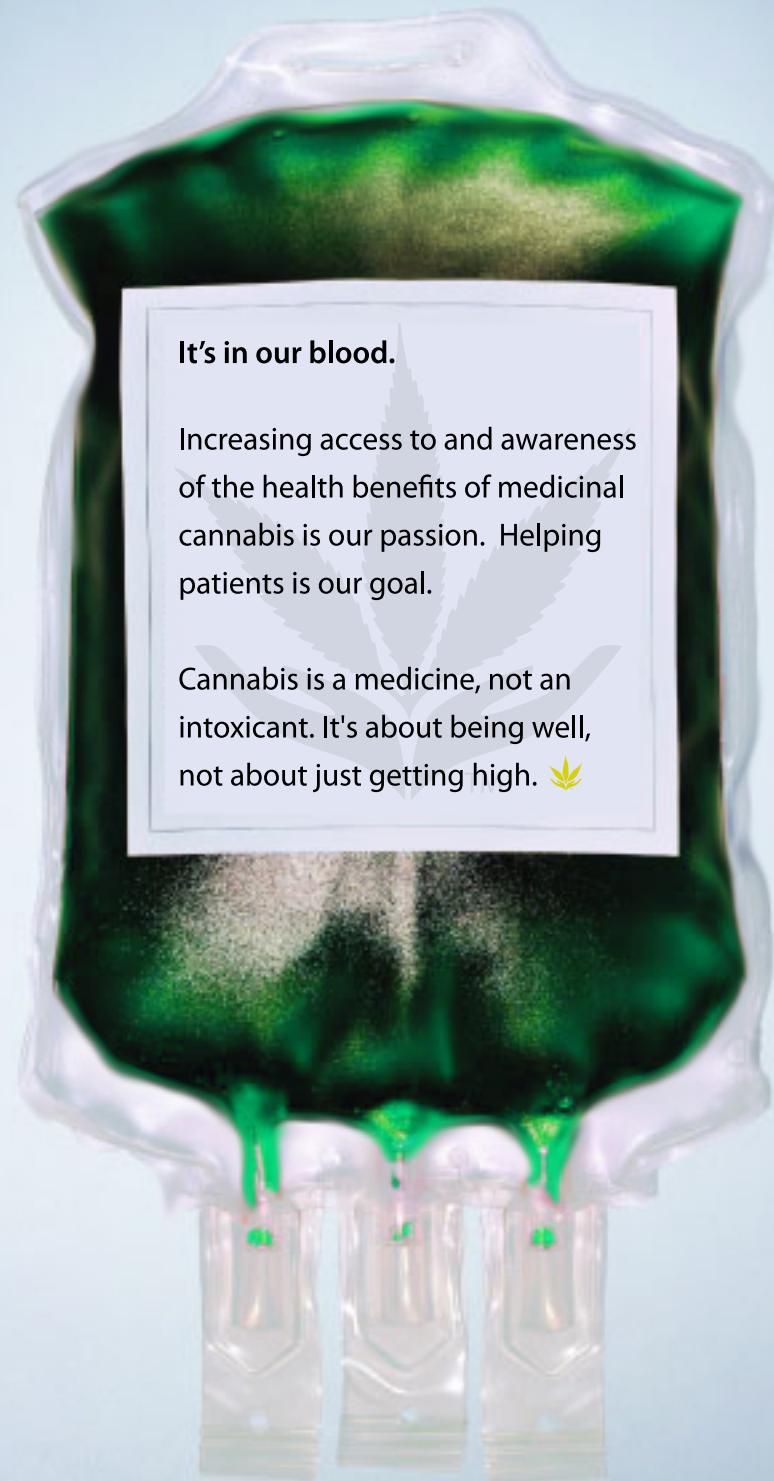
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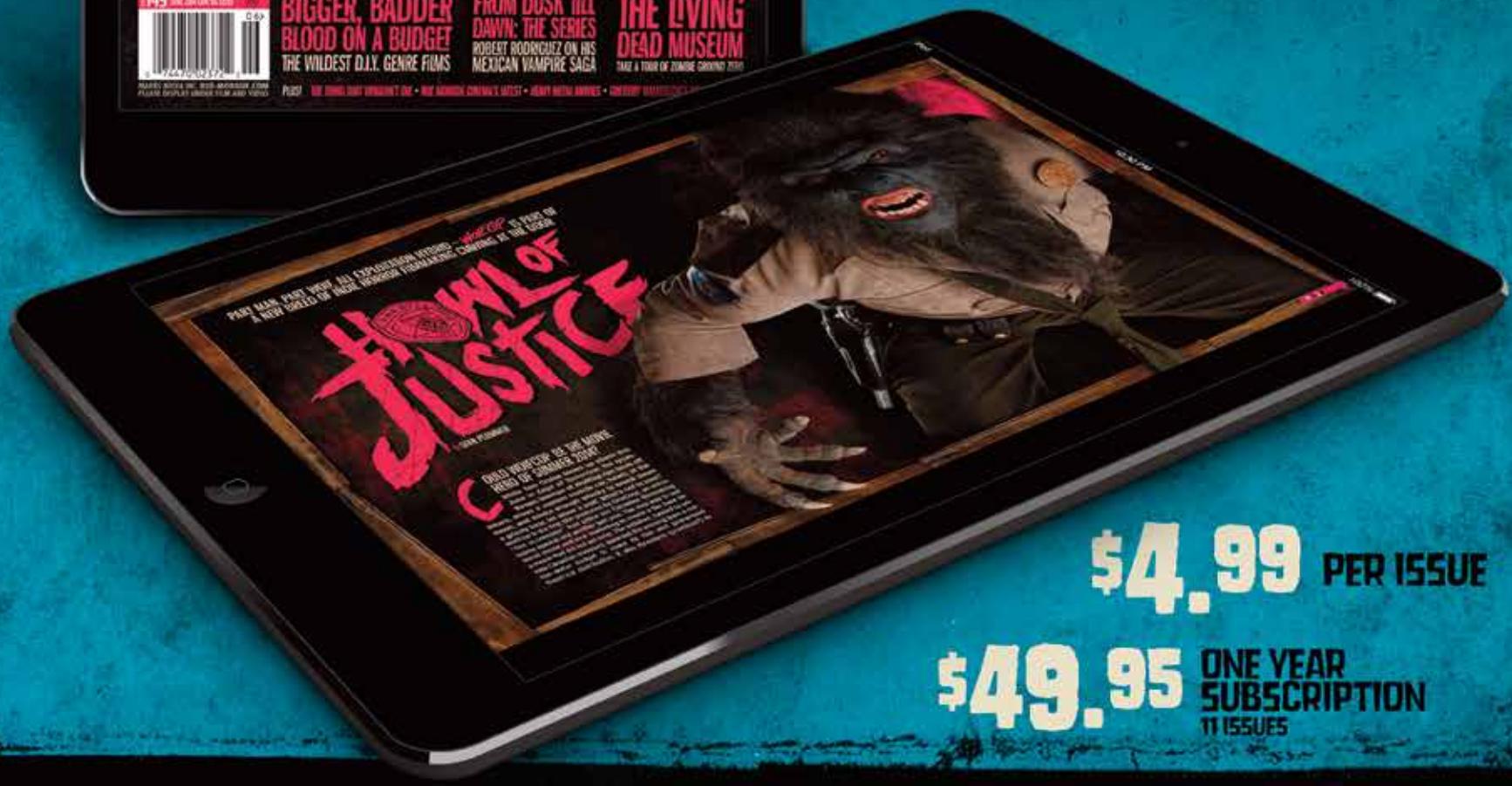
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